

NEW STATESMAN

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From Smith to Soweto

The Conservative MP who wrote to the *Daily Telegraph* this week about 'carefully orchestrated' disturbances in South Africa's black townships was making the same gigantic mistake as the rulers of white Africa are making, in practice, every day. In a vicious attempt to evoke the bravado of Entebbe, Smith's soldiers have crossed the Mozambique border and laid waste a refugee camp. The South Africans are embarrassed by this assault on a black neighbour with whom they would rather have bad relations than none at all, but they send their police to arrest and intern every black political leader and then complain that there is nobody to negotiate with. The salient fact remains that, while the servile press and television of Smith and Vorster carry reports of the far-flung battle-line against the guerrillas, an elemental revolt is taking place within the very heart of their twin fortresses.

Ever since the departure of the Portuguese, followed swiftly by the humiliation of South African arms in Angola, it has been possible for the new generation of apartheid-ruled Africans to see an end to their oppression. During the years of Malan and Verwoerd, as the system was being erected, there seemed no hope of any political challenge (and the lesson of Sharpeville was there to deter even the most Christian and peaceful protest). Now the young Africans have seen their masters beaten on the battlefield, deserted by many European allies, and forced to make trifling concessions. Every concession – whether over multi-racial sport, the introduction of television or the phoney independence of Namibia – reduces the image of invincibility. Dr Herzog and his Dutch Reformed fanatics are right when they accuse Vorster of weakness. The appetite of the Africans for change will increase with the eating, and the training of a new style of leadership is already taking place in the prisons and the shanty towns as much as in the bush.

All of this would be grounds for rejoicing – even with the appalling cost at which such advances are always made – if the stubbornness of Ian Smith did not run the risk of

a four- or five-country race war. The Rhodesian Front would rather chance that outcome than abandon their Ealing in the sun, but so far Mr Vorster has been rather more sanguine. With every day that passes, though, he comes under further pressure to take a hard line internally (which he is doing) and mount a rescue operation for Salisbury (which he is considering doing). The reserve strength of reaction in South Africa may, in any case, prove capable of removing him. It would be a catastrophe if this war were allowed to break out. Why is the West so feeble in its response? Stronger governments than Ian Smith's have fallen on incurring the displeasure of Dr Kissinger – can it be that his heart is not really in the new speeches he makes to African leaders? The British Government seems to be content to leave the problem in perpetual limbo, and make pious noises at the United Nations. For years this paper, along with other opponents of apartheid, has made the safe prediction that one day Africans would refuse to live their lives in humiliation and economic serfdom. Now that they have taken matters into their own hands, the pace and rhythm of events has quickened sharply. Yesterday's diplomatic initiatives already look as dated as the two-dollar pound. So far in Soweto and elsewhere it is a matter of stones and bottles against gas and bullets, but it will be guns before long and there are other countries who will supply them if the necessary vacuum is left.

In his short and peripatetic stay at the Foreign Office, Mr Anthony Crosland has not felt the urge to make any bold statement or initiative. We do not know what British foreign policy is, or what plans it has to meet the changing situation in Southern Africa. There have been hints that our Government would like to do a deal with Pretoria over Smith. If that prospect ever existed as *realpolitik*, it now looks like silliness as well as cynicism. The black population is defying curfew and repression in order to express its own opinion about the future. It would be encouraging if Labour got on the right side of a conflict which will become ever more crucial and urgent as the weeks pass.

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Spotlight on Politics

Christopher Hitchens

An Occupied Country

The Waugh family, who are once again being mined for quips and insights about our present and our past, at least provided the *locus classicus* remark of the resentful middle class. Writing about the 1945 Labour government, Evelyn himself observed that it was like living in an occupied country. The 'Benighted Britain' column of *Free Nation*, organ of the National Association for Freedom, is designed to give the same impression. With its stories of pornography in schools, scroungers in clover, Lefties in the unions and Russians at the gate, it certainly catches the mood of many upset citizens. The fact that at different times the NAF has paid for the legal costs of the famous Tameside appeal, and drawn the support of some 50 Tory MPs is not without moment. True, there are Monday Club aspects to their paper ('Why the Zambesi is OUR front line', by Jeremy Thorpe's former Tory opponent Tim Keigwin) but on the whole they are more serious and better equipped than that sorry outfit ever was. They also have the regular support and encouragement of a certain Gaitskellite clique, in the persons of Dr Stephen Haseler and Mr Edward Pearce; the latter writing a column entitled *Calcraft's Gibbet*, where candidates for the chop have their indictments read back to them. Recent victims have been sinister Michael Foot and wet James Prior.

None of this is as comical as it might seem to 'the natural party of government'. The Tameside victory was no small benchmark, and next in the pipeline is an appeal to the European Court in Strasbourg. It has been lodged on behalf of British Rail employees fired for refusing to join a union; the plea will be that they have no legal recourse except that of conscientious objection on grounds of religion. Success before the court will bring not only a moral victory, but possibly heavy damages as well. One of the individuals cited has recently become a staff member of the NAF. The middle class is recruiting its shop stewards.

In his recent book (*The Decline and Fall of the Middle Class and How It Can Fight Back*: Associated Business Programmes, £3.95) Mr Patrick Huther announces that 'Only a conscious resolve to fight back is likely to make any difference... the middle class should prepare for what could be its last battle.' This tone of voice has started to predominate. Like all good shop stewards (or 'guerrilla capitalists' as these particular cadres are sometimes known) they prefer to find and work on the weak links in the chain. Who better than James Prior, the earnest and useless Tory spokesman on trade union affairs? Heath-like, he sticks out of Margaret Thatcher's shadow cabinet like a Jehovah's Witness in a closed shop. *Free Nation* recently snapped that

Mr Prior speaks for the nerveless, idea-less

rubberised part of his party, whose highest ambition seems to be that their privileges should last for their lifetime.

Until recently, that would have been a fair description of almost any leading Conservative spokesman. The interesting thing about the new Right is that they are not the chinless union-busters of 1926, or Edward Martell's Freedom Group. Nor are they (mostly) prone to the drooling fascism of the National Front or the cretinous nostalgia of Lord Salisbury. They are a mix of apolitical middle-class activists, and highly ideological free-market right-wingers. 'For the first time I can remember,' says one of the latter category, 'things are being done on the Right for the sheer love of the cause.' And, it might be added, for the sheer loathing of the opposition. Prior, described as having 'the talents of a man whose degree was a fourth in estate management', can testify to that.

The centrepiece of the middle-class crusade at the moment is the demand for a Bill of Rights to entrench personal liberty at the level of private property and consumer choice (most notably in education, but in health as well). Propagandists of the order of Russell Lewis, former head of the Conservative Political Centre and now retained by the *Daily Mail*, eat sleep and breathe the idea. So does Sir Keith Joseph. In a recent seminar based on the thoughts of Lord Scarman (whose Tameside judgment out-Denninged Denning), he advocated:

... some means by which the fashionable policies of the day and the temptation on the government of the day to adopt and enforce them can be effectively checked or at least queried, not merely by technical appeals through semi-judicial procedures but by the political choice and power of the affected communities themselves.

Of course, whether you choose Clay Cross or Tameside as your village Hampdens is a moot point, just as whether you should hammer 'the scroungers' and squeal about VAT inspection of tax-evasion is a moot

point. The whole argument has had the unfortunate effect of eclipsing Labour interest in a Bill of Rights, which is a gain for nobody. Quite what Sir Keith means by 'semi-judicial' is also somewhat ambiguous, but sufficiently so to arouse the suspicion that he is talking, as usual, about entrenching the middle class. Thus NAF, in its founding charter, speaks boldly of 'the right to dispose or convey property by deed or will', which is a message exquisitely modulated for different ears at different positions in the hall.

Other themes – notably denationalisation in the public service industries – are only occasionally allowed to peek over the horizon. Apart from an unshakeable feeling that Chancellor Erhard's Germany was the high point of post-war European civilisation, more detailed policy prescriptions are hard to come by. And, as so often in these cases, the letters column rather lets the side down. 'Nationalisation – a workers' charter to do nothing while living at the public expense' is not only a direct quotation but a representative one. Nothing new in these shopkeepers' prejudices, except that the editors and promulgators of them firmly believe that this time the leader of the Conservative Party is on their side.

A few years ago Mogens Glistrup led a successful taxpayers' and shopkeepers' revolt in Denmark. He piled up the votes of those who had had enough of paying tax ('Why should we put their false teeth in for them?'), those who felt hemmed in by controls and bureaucracy, those who were fed up with what Ian Macleod used to call 'the nanny state'. Today, Margaret Thatcher intones about 'the pocket-money society' as a metaphor for the same kind of creeping socialism. Advertently or otherwise, the propagandists of the NAF have put their finger on her greatest political difficulty. One of their latest papers exulted that 'what happened at Weymouth the other day shows what can be done. The town was plastered with posters for the *Free Nation* and the paper was rapidly sold out in most newsagents'. Two, three, many Weymouths. But Glistrup has gone, and the phrase the Tories dread most is 'Scandinavian conservatism' where their co-thinkers have until recently been reduced to a sporadic, grizzling, petty-bourgeois rump.

The Conservative Party has changed a great deal, but not to the point where it does not care about winning. Winning in this case will depend on finding an answer to the question 'What will you do about the unions?'. Against the grain, they have chosen a conciliatory approach, exemplified by the wretched Prior, who joined a trade union for publicity purposes and then forgot to cancel his political levy to the Labour Party. Rhodes Boyson is fond of quoting Cobden's letter to Bright, insisting that 'To win elections we shall have to choose fighting cocks with which our people will identify'.

James Prior and his fellow men will never answer that description. They think that the country must always be at least a little bit 'occupied' by socialism, that workers may not be very nice, but that you simply have to have them and strike a bargain with them. The Freedom Riders reckon that you won't get the Liberal defectors back if you talk that way.

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Alexander Cockburn

Vacancy for a President

'I lied,' said Earl Long succinctly, when accused of putting through the tax increases he had been promising all through his campaign he would never introduce. Americans like to tell the story now and again, as a genial way of indicating the rascally nature of politicians generally. You would think that this sort of cynical approach would wax with the passing of the months, as the milestones and the promises click by on the way to election day in November. But it doesn't seem to be happening that way. Everyone gets caught up in the spirit of the thing. Democrats, united behind Carter, promise tax reform, national health care, reduced military spending, a strong national defence, a balanced budget in four years and 3 per cent unemployment in three, justice for all, forced busing only as a last resort, honesty and a better class of bureaucrat. Republicans, united behind Ford, promise continued economical recovery, a strong national defence, a balanced budget, justice, maybe an amendment on busing and fewer bureaucrats all round. Everyone is for less government until it comes down to his specific case, like the Kentucky business man

I met in Kansas last week who was for Reagan and price controls. He was for Reagan because Ronnie preached free-market virtues, and for price controls because he had nearly been ruined by the high cost of steel.

The two political conventions in Madison Square Garden and Kansas City have naturally increased the extrusion of hot air generally, with a speed-up towards Utopia in some form or another more or less guaranteed at the turn of the year. Meanwhile the 40 million or so readers of the Sunday magazine *Parade* had something to ponder, namely the publication of the 'standard of living hit parade'. Citing the Swiss Banking Society as his source, *Parade's* editor listed last Sunday the 38 richest nations in the world, measured by their per-capita gross national product in US dollars. The US itself came only sixth, wedged between Denmark and West Germany. Great Britain came 18th between New Zealand and East Germany. Kuwait led us all. Most of *Parade's* readers probably do not also subscribe to the business magazine *Fortune*. However, a glance at its

August issue would have brought similarly disquieting tidings. Beneath an attractively coloured chart the editors of *Fortune* announced that 'for many years American workers were the highest paid in the world – but no longer. In hourly compensation, wages and fringes together, a number of industrial countries have passed, caught up with, or significantly gained on the US'. Giving *Fortune's* own philosophical posture, the editors cheerfully add: 'As a result, the US has fared comparatively well in recent years in terms of labour costs.'

More or less lost beneath generalised sloganeering by the Democrats for full employment and by the Republicans for less inflation is the simple fact that the American worker in private industry is not doing well at all, is in fact taking home less in real pay than he was five years ago. The US recovery internationally is partly being financed by the failure of American unions to keep their members abreast, let alone ahead of, economic realities. Since, to a degree which would be staggering to any European newspaper reader, mainstream American journalists ignore what could be narrowly termed 'the industrial beat', commentators have not been making much of such important facts this year. Nor have they spent much time addressing the fact that the unemployment rate is over 7 per cent in the US, the highest in the advanced countries of the Western world.

The unemployment figures have actually risen recently. The Ford Administration,



well aware that 'economic recovery' is almost the only card it has to play, has been accounting for this by the argument that the labour force is being augmented by single women in large numbers, thus offsetting the rise in employed workers generally. This rationale has enjoyed some success and now all Ford's economic spokesmen have to do is account for the slow-down in consumer spending and the consequent faltering nature of the famous recovery. Longer-term questions of the effect on pay rates of the increasing injection into the labour force of women and part-time workers are ignored altogether. So if a sizeable chunk of the American electorate feels it is being left out of Utopia and consequently votes for Carter as the man with a shorter criminal record, no one can say that Ford and his strategists have been warned by immense public tumult. The insouciance of these gentlemen can be gauged by the fact that with the Ford-Dole ticket they seem to be anchoring their strategy around the Mid-Western states of Michigan and Kansas. Though the auto companies are presently enjoying record profits, many car workers in Michigan have not regained jobs lost in the recent recession.

So much for Ford's home state of Michigan. Kansas, home of Senator Bob Dole, is a farm state and Dole partly owes his elevation to the fact that Ford hopes to allay hostility among farmers attendant on his last embargo on grain sales to the Soviet Union. Once again Ford appears to be defying the waves. At this moment farmers are desperately stockpiling their wheat in the hopes of a higher selling price. Such an upturn, given the size of the crop, is unlikely to occur. Rural credit banks are tightening up on their loans, squeezed in their turn by big commercial banks. None of this augurs for a big turnout by farmers for the Republican ticket in November.

What, on 17 January, in the first days of his Administration, would Carter have to confront? Absent, in anything other than the most general terms, has been much discussion of the energy situation. The datum here is that after the oil embargo of 1973 the United States pulled itself together and made itself much more dependent on foreign sources of oil. Furthermore, with the world economic recovery, the strategic situation now favours the Opec countries.

Thus far Carter's prospective foreign policy has been outlined in terms of general love of honesty and fair play and localised hostility to Henry Kissinger and all his works. Veterans of the foreign policy establishment such as Cyrus Vance and Paul Nitze scurry south to Georgia with briefing papers. Old trustees of Vietnam vintage such as Dean Rusk have at least a portion of Carter's ear. The fact that the US is still the world's leading imperial power and not the site of some seminar discussing decency in foreign relations is even now beginning to make itself felt. Only this week Carter would not rule out some form of intervention into European elections, if the national interest demanded it. He has spoken energetically of trade sanctions, of greater toughness towards the Russians, though not as forcefully about grain embargoes. A brisk confrontation with the Opec countries at the turn of the year is the most obvious way in which Americans

could, after the jolly frolics of 1976, find their sense of continuity restored. And for a hint of this they may not have to wait until 17 January. For the first time since the Nixon-Kennedy debates of 1960 it appears that Ford and Carter will probably debate together later this year. Given the fact that Democrats and Republicans are basically in agreement on foreign policy – with Democrats traditionally the war party – it will be hard for Carter to manoeuvre very far to Ford's Left. His alternative could be some fierce talk about the Arab oil

squeeze and the flaccid comportment of America abroad. We may not have heard the last of the Korean DMZ and events therein.

Perhaps it is still a little early in an election year to start talking about reality and discounting rhetoric as the body politic rises like a spaceship on its cushion of hot air, but there has been so much talk of honesty and a new dawn this time around that it would be wise to ready ourselves for a slightly harder bump than usual when the spaceship returns to earth.

New York

Selwyn Boyle

The Army Out of Step in Ulster

The terrorists are running amok in Northern Ireland, the whole place is teetering on the brink of bloody civil war, and the time has come for the army to be given *carte blanche* to stamp down hard on the IRA. The casual reader of virtually any British newspaper during the past month could be excused for thinking that this is an accurate picture. He would probably be surprised to know that only 15 people have been killed so far this month in Northern Ireland – fewer than the monthly average for 1976 and only just over *half* the total for August last year. True, bombings are up this year: but there were still more shootings in August last year than for the first 24 days of this month.

So why have the leader writers and Ulster pundits suddenly been working overtime discussing Northern Ireland and calling for the army to be let loose once again in the Catholic ghettos? There could be a simple answer: that the propaganda department of Army Headquarters in Lisburn has been hard at work. Is Lieut.-General Sir David House, the GOC Northern Ireland, trying to stir things up?

His predecessor, General Sir Frank King, used to refer privately to Mr Merlyn Rees as 'Harry Worth', and House has continued the military tradition by letting journalists know in no uncertain terms that he thinks Mr Rees's policies are not working. It is all much more subtle than that, of course: such briefings are 'off the record' and are frequently made via his chief press officer at Lisburn, Colonel Ian Graham.

Holiday relief reporters have been flying in to Belfast, seeing Colonel Graham and (if he approves of them) General House, and passing on to readers the familiar military solution: there are a tiny bunch of thugs intimidating the decent mass of people and the time has come for the army to go in and rout them. There is no real reason to suppose that this approach would succeed when it has failed so disastrously before: the army have shot dead more innocent people than terrorists in South Armagh this year, for example. But the briefings, compounded with the peculiarly blinkered military wishful thinking, go on.

Take the report of Ms Clare Hollingworth on the front page of the *Daily Tele-*

graph of 17 August. 'The time is right for the army to take off their kid gloves,' asserted Ms Hollingworth. 'They are now working at a great disadvantage . . . they have either been prevented by directives from Whitehall from penetrating terrorist organisations or have failed to do so,' she went on. Yet the answers were stunningly straightforward. 'Some form of identity card with photographs is essential for the security forces to operate efficiently . . . the army should have greater powers to impose temporary curfews, close roads and make snap searches of suspect houses and offices.' And the person to do all this? 'Ideally, the new Rees should be a Mountbatten or a Templer, a supremo with the right to take military and political decisions.'

This breathtaking analysis of Northern Ireland's problems came after Ms Hollingworth, arriving fresh from Peking, had been in Belfast for only a few days. But the *Daily Telegraph* being what it is, General House was only too happy to see her. Two weeks ago the *Sunday Times* 'revealed' a split between army and Northern Ireland Office thinking, and in Belfast there are no prizes for guessing the identity of the senior but discontented officer whose opinions were extensively covered.

The tragedy is that General House and his PR men seem to have decided on this new get-tough approach at the very time when it is most likely to be harmful. Despite the British consensus view of a tiny minority of thugs terrorising the masses, centuries of history and seven years' direct experience means that the average Catholic living in a ghetto still looks ultimately on the IRA rather than the army, or the even more hated Royal Ulster Constabulary, as his saviours.

But recently fascist Provisional IRA mob rule has increased in Andersonstown, with even some Catholic pubs being bombed as a result of internal Provo struggles. Slowly the tide started to turn, and the deaths of the three Maguire children – crushed after troops shot dead the IRA driver of a car – produced an emotional watershed. This culminated in the women's peace movement, which despite saturation media coverage is not as strong as it may appear: 20,000 deeply sincere women may be willing to

attend an emotional rally in warm sunshine on a Saturday afternoon, but would they be willing to come out at 3 a.m. in Ballymurphy on a freezing night to try to stop the snipers?

Yet the peace women do present a faint glimmer of hope. It takes a lot of courage and also a sublimation of instinct for an Andersonstown Catholic to renounce the IRA; but tentative condemnation of the Provisionals does *not* also imply whole-hearted support for the army and RUC. Quite the contrary, in fact: many Andersonstown Catholics still blame the army for the Maguire tragedy because troops opened fire in a crowded road.

So although the women want the Provo hijackers and mobs to get off their backs, they want the British Army to get off their backs as well. This means that they want an end to continual night prowling at their back doors by not-always-angelic soldiers, and that they do not want their teenage sons to be 'lifted' at the drop of a hat and taken away for questioning by troops. 'Peace' in Andersonstown is very much a two-sided concept and requires a selflessly diplomatic and low-key military approach: the slightest army provocation, like the shooting by troops of an innocent Catholic taxi-driver last Sunday, can turn the masses back into the arms of the Provisionals again.

This is why General House's perception that, with the people calling publicly for peace, now is the time to push for Government policies to be toughened (using the press as a lever), is so dangerously misconceived. We have already seen Lieutenant-Colonel Keith Wilby in Londonderry publicly defending his soldiers after they had beaten up some young stone throwers. That doubtless brought applause from some quarters in Britain, but it was a blatant V-sign to Mr Rees and his policy of dealing with terrorists offenders through the courts. The youths Colonel Wilby described as 'young buggers' were arrested and still face a court hearing, but they have in effect already been punished without trial. And last week came an absurd army statement (later hurriedly withdrawn) threatening that troops might arrest seven-year-olds. Few things could anger the ordinary people of the Creggan and Bogside more than seeing their children being roughed up by the army they think should not be there. For the hitherto improving army/Catholic relations in Londonderry, subtract 30 points.

When the *Sunday Times* story was published, Mr Rees met General House for a hurriedly convened Sunday lunch. If we are to believe the Northern Ireland Office (and few in Northern Ireland do) the two are still the greatest of pals. But with the peace women planning another rally in the Protestant Shankill Road this weekend, it could ruin the faint hopes that now exist if the army are to have their way and launch an offensive into the Catholic ghettos. Next Monday Mr Rees will have a routine security meeting with General House, and it would be in the interests of everyone in Northern Ireland if he were politely to remind the 54-year-old general who is boss in Northern Ireland. If he cannot be firm with him, he should make way for someone who can stand up to the hawkish generals and colonels of Lisburn.

Eric Moonman

The Language of Socialism

The language of socialism is the language of love and of compassion, so Aneurin Bevan told me shortly after the uproar over his 'lower than vermin' speech. He was deeply hurt at the time by the way in which the press latched on to this phrase, ignoring the content of his speech about the contrast between Labour's social policy and the Tory policies it replaced. Even some of his own party colleagues failed to understand that the words had been drawn out of him by the compassion he felt for the thousands of people he had seen starving in the 1930s as a result of the Tory means test.

It is worth noting this classic political myth from the past, of Nye Bevan as the great hater, because at many Labour Party gatherings today from ward level to annual conference you are likely to be assailed on every side by the language of hatred. And the haters are hardly ever fired by any personal experience of deprivation; nor are the Tories usually their chief objectives. Their vituperation is directed almost entirely at the Labour Government and at anyone who defends the traditional Labour

Party doctrine of evolutionary, not revolutionary, socialism.

The language used is the language of contempt and class-hatred, packed with meaningless jargon, and delivered, even to meetings of half-a-dozen, in a manner more suited to an outdoor rally. It is not just a matter of semantics, a kind of *Alice in Wonderland* approach to words used to mean what the speaker chosens to say they mean; if it were, a rebuke for shoddy thinking would be sufficient. But it isn't, because the language reflects a doctrinal stance far removed from the Labour Party's democratic socialism. Most of those from whose mouths this language comes would be far more at home with the communists; others anyway are members of the International Socialists, the Trotskyites, or the newly formed Cradle Group, to name but a few. I have even encountered one or two who would be more comfortable with the National Front.

To see what I am getting at, look at this typical resolution to a recent regional conference:

This Conference is of the opinion that this [the Government's latest economic measures] is only the latest betrayal by the Labour right-wing leadership. Thus the Government is deliberately creating mass unemployment.

This September's Blackpool conference also includes resolutions showing little or no tolerance of what Labour's leaders are trying to do:

This Conference resents the Government's attacks on the living standards of the working class in its attempt to save the unplanned British economy from yet another crisis.

This Conference is implacably opposed to the cuts . . . they inevitably mean a transfer of wealth and power to the rich in our society.

This Conference deplores, as contrary to the basic principles of Labour Party policy, the philosophy which underlines the White Paper on public expenditure . . .

But the language of the resolutions themselves is mild when compared with the usual speeches supporting them, which resound with accusations of treachery, and the same accusations are hurled at any speaker who dares to try to explain the difficulties of the present Government. At the same time, very few resolutions are concerned with what has always seemed to me to be the real business of conference – namely, putting forward practical resolutions related to improving the way socialist legislation works out in practice. Nor is there genuine compassion about the often modest changes in legislation which might improve the lot of Mrs A, pensioner, or Mrs B, unsupported mother, or Mr D, disabled and unemployed. The hard graft of making socialism real is sacrificed to the passing of resolutions about nationalisation, aimed at keeping the doctrine 'pure' even if it keeps Labour out of office.

And let us be quite clear about this.

Roger Woddis

Sir John at Seventy

The Poet Laureate is 70 tomorrow.

Telegrams from total strangers,
Greetings from a girl called Maud,
Roses from the 'Ruskin Rangers' –
Gosh! I feel an awful fraud.

Conscience is my sternest critic,
Flowery tributes make me wince;
Why do I feel parasitic
When I read the public prints?

Dryden's ghost is more forgiving
Than the cynic at my gate:
How I wish that I was living
Back in 1668!

Silent as I am, I wonder
How a poet earns his keep
When the roll of distant thunder
Fails to rouse him from his sleep.

Dismal news does not inspire me,
Ballads will not end the drought;
One day surely they will fire me,
One day they will find me out.

Tenpence for a new potato,
Unemployment up this week;
Where exactly is Soweto?
Who was killed in Mozambique?

Oh! Revive me with the *Beano*!
Tennis-dance and evening tie!
Since the death of Valentino
Life has somehow passed me by.

Their words do influence the electorate, who react strongly against this diatribe of hate. A parliamentary colleague, a keen and devoted man, can hardly utter a sentence without resorting to the language of envy. He is something of a hit with a militant audience, but the vast majority of people are alienated and just switch off. Another MP of the extreme Left said: 'We speak the words of the class war. It takes a real socialist to use them.'

Of course, the language of hate is not confined to the Left: Enoch Powell, Ian Paisley and Ronald Bell reveal the total perversion of the extremist and his use of language. But it is my own party that I am more immediately concerned with

The story of Labour's declining vote and declining party membership since the 1950s can be seen not as a protest against the way Labour governments act in office (the electorate understands perfectly well the economic difficulties we face), but as a rejection of the way parliamentary candidates and MPs conduct themselves. Those who looked to the Labour Party to end the class system are appalled to see it being used as an agency for reviving the class war. In the past six years I have seen many compassionate, caring socialists, both new and long-standing members, give up because the traditional comradeship between party members from differing sections of our society is being undermined by extremists trying to foment class war. The Labour Party has been as much the creation of the caring middle class, like Clem Attlee, as of those whose needs it was created to serve – the workers and the underprivileged.

The essence of the Labour Party has never been to revive the class war – it has been to extinguish it; to create a society in which every single person is respected for himself; in which every single child gets the opportunity to realise his or her potential; and in which the economic life of the country is organised rationally and with a decent order of priorities.

Of course there have always been differences of opinion within the party, even within the leadership. Every time a newspaper writes of a 'split' in the Labour Party it demonstrates its failure to understand the fundamental nature of the party – our recognition that our strength comes from the diversity and individuality of our members and the contributions they make to the movement. But the differences have never been fundamental – they have been about means, not ends, about speed of progress, not about the direction in which we are travelling. And above all, they have never before involved a questioning of each other's integrity or right to call oneself a socialist. But the present intemperance of language endangers the unity of purpose despite the diversity which is our strength.

It is the Labour leadership which must end this strife, and we do have leaders who can give us inspiration without insurrection. Jim Callaghan certainly can, and it is on him that the burden of leading us out of the present situation must fall. As he demonstrated so ably as chairman of the postponed annual conference in 1974, his own language and style of behaviour can govern the language and style of the whole party. He is no less a socialist than the

man who competes with his colleagues at a GMC for strength of language. His speeches over the past five years – on the underprivileged, on law and order, on the undeveloped countries, on the economy – show that where courtesy and compassion are allied to real knowledge and understanding, you don't have to make do with shouting slogans.

If the Labour Party is to make any progress at all, we need power for longer periods than we have had since 1945 and with a majority reflecting considerably more support than the 37 and 39 per cent who voted for us in the 1974 elections. We

cannot hope to secure an unequivocal mandate if we alienate the uncommitted or take things faster than society is prepared to go. The language and behaviour of some party members shows a lack of respect for the electorate which can only lead us out of office. Bevan, again, understood the nature of the problem: castigating his wife for the sins of the largely Scottish ILP and their doctrinal purity which was leading them into breach with the Labour Party, he said: 'Yes, you will be pure all right. But remember, at the price of impotency. You will not influence the course of British politics by as much as a hair's-breadth.'

Julian Barnes

The Power of the PEN

'It's too bad,' the American poet Louis Simpson once lamented, 'that the love of books brings you into contact with the people who write them . . . writers are not the best company, they are too full of themselves; nor are they even good conversationalists.' PEN, the international writers' organisation, lives by constant refutation of that proposition; and this week, the air crackling with bonhomie, their 41st congress has been taking place at London's Penta Hotel. Five hundred delegates, official and unofficial, jetted in from the 78 PEN Centres for executive sessions, literary sessions, a government reception, literary rambles and outings, visits to the Proms, the National Theatre, Sissinghurst and the Portobello Road, and a week of professional conviviality leading up to a final banquet at the Café Royal. The crush brought to mind the gathering for the Queen's 'high, heroic Games' in the *Dunciad*:

They summon all her Race: An endless band
Pours forth and leaves unpeopled half

the land
A motley mixture! in long wigs, in bags,
In silks, in crapes, in Garters, and in rags,
From drawing rooms, from colleges,

from garrets,
On horse, on foot, in backs and
gilded chariots.

How could there be so many of them; and would they all have heard of each other? What on earth would the Latvians find to say to the Langue d'Oc delegates during the Japanese Tea Ceremony in the Zodiac Bar, an event charmingly, if bafflingly, sponsored by the Japan PEN Centre. What, when it came down to it, had they all come for?

An early attempt to put me in the picture was made by a portly writer-in-exile, swigging brandy and soda in his 15th-floor cellule, and looking back over a dozen congresses. 'I tell you. Bloody hell. You see most of the people here, women, about 40, 50, yes? I tell you, they come here for a screw.' My mind shuffled embarrassedly through our own delegations; surely not — or —? Pondering the bitterness of exile, I asked: 'But what will you go to on the opening – the literary session, the party? I tell you. First day, I get bloody

pissed. I screw.' What did PEN do anyway, he moaned philosophically. Governments scorned it, resolutions were meaningless: why, in the Fifties, we once demanded the withdrawal of Russian troops from Eastern Europe.' In that case, I wondered, why was he such an assiduous attender of the congress. 'I tell you.' He splattered hard-boiled egg into his B and S. 'Bloody good travel club. Pay £60. You go to Egypt. You meet the President. Bloody hell. You use psychology, you get any woman you want here.'

I hesitate to pass such stuff on, but it would be hard to deny the colourfulness of the fringe characters, or the hard core of social freeloaders present. At the opening party, however, a more conventional image of writers at play reasserted itself, and early concerns for their welfare evaporated. Whatever they may be like as writers (and the list of delegates makes any reader feel both ignorant and insular), they were accomplished socialites and congress-goers. 'The nibs of the PEN Club,' as Dylan Thomas once saw them, were 'pipe-sucking, carpet-slipped, NEW STATESMAN in pocket, "Mr Y has timbre", symposium contributors ("I write in white ink in a kneeling position").' They're not like that any more: John Braine was there for a start – not a man to go around with his NS exposed. Kisses rent the air; suave greetings were exchanged in respective languages; cheery English voices shouted: 'This all looks jolly Pennified!' Delightful old Latins grappled at your lapel badge like Ancient Mariners and sought to detain you with tales of Galsworthy, Wells, and the early days of PEN. A Belgian countess winningly reprimanded me for describing myself as a mere journalist, and told me about *La Nouvelle Critique*, apparently a Continental potion which transforms journalism into literature. I was enjoying the fraternal atmosphere when I was abruptly seized from behind by a pair of beefy, exiled arms, propelled across the room, and bundled into the midst of the Irish delegation. So this, I thought, is what he meant by psychology. The Irish ladies were, I confess, extremely agreeable; but I made an excuse and left.

What, you may validly wonder, does PEN actually do? It seems to be a sort of

reverse iceberg: eight-ninths on the surface, socialising, one-ninth concealed below, carrying out valuable work, with a minimum of publicity, on behalf of harassed and imprisoned writers. Current subjects for concern include, for instance, Kim Che-ha, a Korean satirist first imprisoned for an anti-Establishment lampoon in 1970, and now on trial again (no trivial matter in Korea, where the second conviction carries the death penalty). Regular inquiries, telegrams, and attempted visits can sometimes at least keep the writers alive and stop them from 'disappearing', even if PEN can rarely affect the sentences passed on them.

At the Congress itself, the main formal activities are the executive and literary sessions. Business at the former has been fairly routine this year. The Yugoslavs have applied to double their number of official delegates; and there have been the regular political dust-ups which disturb this theoretically apolitical organisation. Israel has been attacked by the Egyptian Centre, the South African Centre may be called upon to explain itself, and there are moves to expel the already suspended Chilean Centre; while the East Germans, reliable stirrers, have this time protested at the choice of Arthur Koestler as keynote speaker because of his 'anti-communist image'. Little of this activity comes to anything, since the PEN charter insists that individual centres are not held responsible for the actions of their governments. In any case, the protests are often initiated for the benefit of the sponsoring government back home: as one of the International Vice-Presidents put it, the

executive meetings are 'a great place for humbugs'.

The literary sessions, if more personal, are scarcely less dogmatic: statement, rather than interchange, is the dominant mode, and name-watching a principal audience function. The poetry sessions, discussing Keats's phrase 'truth of the imagination', offered a variety of styles: from Robert Lowell's fierce puzzlement, to Muriel Rukeyser's warm, free-floating rhapsody, half celebratory, half-threnodic, to Kwang-chung Yu's inscrutable metaphors ('The poet is the master smuggler who always gets away with it'; 'Poetry is the fragile wand for that dirty girl in the kitchen'). With the question thrown to the floor, the same mode prevailed; an Iranian recalled Blake's condemnation of British imperialism in Africa; an Irishman urged us to realise that the world of imagination included 'the rag-and-bone shop of Gloucester Road'. Critical insights and pleasures were thus sporadic rather than continuous: Stephen Spender's observations that the British have grown more imaginative with the loss of Empire; Koestler's computer-style reworking of Keats - 'Beauty is the function of truth; truth a function of beauty.'

As for the future, there were some detectable signs of change and unrest at this year's congress. The vivacious president of the Los Angeles chapter, Ms Terry Dunna-hoo, noting that the welcoming committee consisted of six male greybeards, was disturbed by the organisation's sexual tokenism. Agitation about ageism and sexism could do PEN little but good. Another new

direction is that of geographical expansion, of trying to initiate new centres in Africa and South America. A more than symbolic first step lies in the appointment of the new International President. Sir Victor Pritchett (who incidentally said he'd never spotted venery at any of the congresses, though admitted some of them were pretty dull) has just finished a three-year stint, and retires to wide praise for his diligence, tact and humour. He is now succeeded by Mario Vargas Llosa, the Peruvian novelist who, despite being the only candidate (a fact which argues the sleepiness of some of the centres), is an interesting and indicative choice.

Both Unesco, from whom it receives a subvention, and PEN itself have long thought the organisation to be too Euro-peanised; though founding new centres is harder than one might think. Africa, for instance, has proved difficult territory, as writers there seem (often with cause) to be apprehensive of joining international organisations. There is some hope, too, that the Russians might be finally tempted into joining: this year they have sent three observers to the congress, led by the redoubtable Nikolai Pederenko (the former Ambassador to the United Nations who, when defending the invasion of Czechoslovakia, claimed that it was prompted partly by the activities of Czech writers). Spruced up for the government reception, the Russians looked capable of having their appetites whetted for this sort of amiable annual jamboree. Their writers, after all, are traditionally good at psychology.

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Walter C. Patterson*

Exporting Armageddon

Saving the nuclear industry may cost the earth. The literal truth of this grim conclusion is at last beginning to dawn, even in the UK. The worldwide export of nuclear technology and materials, including not only nuclear reactors but also enrichment and reprocessing plants, enriched uranium and plutonium, is creating a spread of nuclear weapons capability that may soon be beyond any semblance of control. Within ten years the number of countries able to manufacture nuclear weapons will probably have passed two dozen, and will be growing rapidly. By 1990 the amount of plutonium produced in civil nuclear installations in developing countries alone will probably be enough to make more than ten atom bombs per day. The much-trumpeted 'safeguards' against misuse of civil nuclear technology are patently ineffectual, and growing more so. What impels the nuclear exporters to pursue a course of such suicidal irrationality? The stake, according to recent developments, is the survival of the world's nuclear industry. But the price may be unthinkable high.

The control of nuclear proliferation is becoming the most pressing issue on the international agenda. Unfortunately, however, current transactions in the nuclear market-place demonstrate that what prevails now in nuclear policy is not statesmanship but salesmanship. The US is proceeding with plans to sell reactors to Egypt and Israel; agreements were initialled on 4 and 5 August. Neither Egypt nor Israel is a party to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. On 6 August France signed a contract to build two nuclear power stations in South Africa, beating a joint bid from the US, West Germany and the Netherlands. South Africa is not a party to the NPT. On 4 August France announced an agreement to sell two nuclear power stations to South Korea. On 4 July West Germany signed contracts to build two nuclear power stations in Iran; France is in the running for two more, and the US for eight.

France is also considering supplying Iran with a reprocessing plant for the recovery of plutonium. France has also agreed to supply a reprocessing plant to Pakistan – even though Pakistan is not a party to the NPT, and has only one small nuclear power station. On 8 August US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger failed to persuade Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto of Pakistan to drop plans for the reprocessing plant. Earlier in the year the US had been able, by what was reported to be uncompromising arm-twisting, to persuade South Korea to drop plans to obtain a reprocessing plant from France. But the US had been unsuccessful in its objections to the landmark deal between West Germany and Brazil, involving not only eight reactors but also an enrichment plant and a reprocessing plant. Contracts for the first two reactors were signed on 22 July. Brazil is

not a party to the NPT. In January 1976 Canada agreed to sell a second CANDU reactor to Argentina – not a party to the NPT – and one to South Korea. In March 1976 France announced that it had agreed to supply a reactor to Libya. When the France-Libya agreement was announced even case-hardened nuclear veterans blanched. On that evidence the headlong enthusiasm for nuclear exports had at last clearly overridden almost any imaginable criterion of caution.

Ironically, the upsurge of nuclear export activity coincides with the final public admission by nuclear experts that the manufacture of nuclear weapons is frankly not very difficult, given the necessary fissile material – plutonium or highly enriched uranium. Why, then, are the nuclear industry and exporter governments suddenly so committed to making widely available precisely the missing ingredient which a prospective weapon-maker will require? The official government and industry response to this query is that they are moved by the desire to provide recipients with 'cheap nuclear electricity', the energy of the future, which will power the world when the oil runs out, will raise living standards in developing countries and will be an all-round boon to mankind. However, closer examination of the fine print reveals the desperate self-interest behind this altruistic posture. The truth of the matter is that the nuclear industry is in dire trouble, and that exports seem to be the only means available to keep the industry from coming unstuck at every seam.

Consider, as an admittedly egregious instance, the nuclear industry of the UK. The UK industry has not sold a reactor overseas for a dozen years; but it is mounting a renewed effort to make a place for itself on the export bandwagon. Sir John Hill, chairman of the UK Atomic Energy Authority, made this clear in his recent report to Tony Benn, Secretary of State for Energy. The report, published on 6 August, declared that the UK nuclear industry faces a real danger of collapse unless a minimum programme of domestic orders for nuclear power stations are backed by a 'vigorous export policy'. Sir John's deputy chairman, Dr Walter Marshall, who is also Mr Benn's chief scientist at the Department of Energy, made a similar assertion at a nuclear industry conference in London on 8 July.

To be sure, the UK nuclear industry is in a parlous state; so with all its woes it cannot be blamed for looking with longing at the burgeoning international trade in civil nuclear technology. But the international trade is burgeoning precisely because the UK industry is by no means alone in its doldrums. On the contrary, UK cir-

cumstances are only a somewhat extreme example of the domestic malaise affecting nuclear industry everywhere. Even the mighty US industry, led by Westinghouse and US General Electric, is finding it difficult to cope with the mounting disillusion of US utilities about nuclear electricity. In 1975, after earlier boom years, Westinghouse won only four domestic orders for new nuclear power stations, GE only one; neither Babcock & Wilcox nor Combustion Engineering won a single order.

Thirteen stations already ordered were deferred for up to four years, and another six indefinitely; eight were cancelled outright. Four of the eight cancellations and two of the indefinite deferrals left the order book of the Shell-Gulf joint venture General Atomic completely empty. In November 1975 General Atomic announced that it was withdrawing from the nuclear power business. In San Francisco GA's vice-president, Richard McCormack, told the annual joint conference of the American Nuclear Society and the Atomic Industrial Forum why: 'Front-line vendors (of nuclear stations) to the electric utility industry have yet to make a dollar with certainty, after some twenty years of effort.'

Elsewhere the picture is not much brighter. In Canada, at the end of 1975, Ontario Hydro, the major customer for the CANDU reactors of Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd, cut \$5,200m. from its expansion plans for the coming decade. Three new nuclear stations, a total of 12 CANDUs, are to be postponed, as is another station also expected to be nuclear. One heavy-water plant will be delayed and another probably cancelled outright. In France the general manager of Electricité de France, Marcel Boiteux, wrote in early August to the French government Industry Minister, Michel d'Ornano, warning that budget cuts proposed by the Finance Minister will delay EdF's nuclear power programme. After the French nuclear euphoria of 1974 more realistic estimates of available capital and future demand for electricity have led to progressive reduction of the headlong commitment initially undertaken. Framatome, the French manufacturer of nuclear power stations, has seen 1,000 megawatts per year lopped off the plans, representing a reduction of up to 20 per cent from the original programme.

In West Germany the major manufacturer of nuclear power stations, Kraftwerk Union, is still hovering on the verge of a split, as a result of losses sustained on its nuclear contracts. KWU is a joint venture of Siemens and AEG-Telefunken, and AEG have for some time been deeply unhappy about the deficits run up by KWU every year since its formation. KWU's latest annual report, published in July, recorded a loss of DM 47m. for KWU and its daughter companies; in earlier years the losses were even higher, running well into the hundreds of millions of Deutsche marks.

Presenting the annual report, KWU chairman Klaus Barthelt stressed the importance of export orders for KWU's future. In so doing he echoed the sentiments of his colleagues in nuclear industries everywhere. But he failed to specify just how export orders are becoming essential to the finances of the nuclear industry. In general the role

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of exports in nuclear finances – and that of finance in nuclear exports – has hitherto received far less attention than it deserves. The interrelation between exports and finances may hold the key to the only credible policy for control of nuclear weapons proliferation.

Nuclear finances have long been a grey area. It is impossible to identify with any degree of completeness even the quantifiable costs attributable to a unit of nuclear electricity. The cost of research and development of the technology has always been borne largely by government, initially through weapons programmes and now by government research agencies. Fuel cycle services – uranium exploration, mining and milling, enrichment, reprocessing, radioactive waste management and transport – have hitherto been covered to an undefined but substantial extent by military budgets, leaving the expected cost of new civil facilities at this stage largely guesswork. Regulatory bodies are of course government-funded; in the nuclear field their responsibilities are considerable, and the resources allocated to them are proportionally high.

Insurance for civil nuclear activities is on a different basis from that for other energy industries; for nuclear insurance, third-party liability limits and government guarantees are laid down by statute, whereas competing industries must make their own provisions for insurance from their own funds. Compounding these uncertainties is a rapid and erratic escalation in the capital cost of nuclear power stations themselves, at a rate presently well above that of general inflation. Accordingly, any claim about the eventual cost of a unit of nuclear energy, especially on a comparative basis, must be regarded with profound scepticism.

Financial Enticements

A nuclear export receives yet another form of government subsidy – which may now be the most essential of all. Each nuclear exporting government has an export credit agency which is invariably involved in financing the country's nuclear exports, on terms more attractive than those available in commercial money markets: loan guarantees, low interest loans, deferred payment and similar provisions. The implications are noted in a scathing critique of the commercial, economic and security aspects of nuclear exports, prepared for the US Energy Research and Development Administration by Barber Associates. The Barber report, ERDA-52, discloses that, as from December 1974, all the Western nuclear exporters were offering enticing financing; France was prepared to provide up to 100 per cent of the capital for a nuclear export at a rate as low as 6.3 per cent over 15 years. On that basis the recent French success in contracts with South Africa and South Korea is understandable. Curiously enough, however, with the exception of one modest involvement in Italy many years ago, the World Bank has never taken part in a nuclear loan. Nuclear facilities do not meet its criteria for economically sound investment.

These considerations clarify the essential role of exports in the finances of the nuclear industry. The pattern is closely akin to that

of the traditional arms trade. A nuclear supplier finds an overseas customer. The supplier's government advances the customer a loan on favourable terms to make the nuclear export sale possible. The proceeds from this loan, of course, go through the hands of the overseas customer into those of the domestic nuclear supplier. In effect, the overseas customer is a conduit through which the exporting government passes funds from its domestic taxpayers to its domestic nuclear industry – a subsidy without which the industry may be unable to survive.

American Sales Drive

The practice has a long pedigree, dating from the first 'Atoms for Peace' programme initiated by US President Dwight Eisenhower in 1954. The US government and the US Atomic Energy Commission were determined to establish civil nuclear technology on an industrial basis, despite its lack of economic appeal. Abundant US reserves of coal, oil and gas made it unlikely that nuclear power could compete in the US; only sweeping government financing, coupled with thinly veiled threats to electrical utilities, at length made it possible to launch the domestic Power Reactor Demonstration Programme. But US interests were convinced that there would eventually be a sizeable overseas market for civil nuclear technology, and every effort was made to establish this market. Enriched uranium was made available at knockdown prices; technical information was provided which eventually prompted the emergence of major European nuclear industries, at first using US nuclear technology under licence, and later becoming full-fledged and aggressive competitors to the US industry. The US also instigated the establishment of the International Atomic Energy Agency, to promote the cause of 'Atoms for Peace', and encourage the development of civil nuclear activities all over the world. Its current budget totals some \$36m.; of this sum \$30m. is earmarked for promotional activities, and only \$6m. for safeguards. In early 1976 Dr Rudolf Rometsch, IAEA inspector-general of safeguards, had a professional staff of just 75, of whom only 44 were field agents. It does not seem a safeguard commensurate with the threat.

Comparatively few people, however, took the matter of misuse of civil nuclear technology very seriously until 18 May 1974. On that date, in the Rajasthan desert, India detonated a nuclear device, made with plutonium manufactured in a research reactor provided by Canada in 1956 and using heavy water from the US. The explosion shook many people a long way from Rajasthan. However, rather than suspending nuclear exports, the nuclear supplier countries instead disappeared behind closed doors for highly confidential discussions about how to minimise weapons proliferation without actually interfering with their export activities. Initially these discussions included seven participants: the US, the USSR, the UK, France, West Germany, Canada and Japan. The nuclear press dubbed them the 'Secret Seven'. More formally known as the Nuclear Suppliers' Group, the exporters have now held several meetings in London. The matter of their delib-

erations has been shrouded in quasi-military secrecy; only the most platitudinous generalities have emerged.

It is believed that the main concern of the Suppliers' Group – to whose ranks have now been added Sweden, Belgium, the Netherlands, Italy, East Germany and Poland – is to agree on guidelines to prevent competing exporters from undercutting each other on contract details concerning safeguards. In every recent export transaction the exporting country has claimed to have insisted on safeguards provisions yet more stringent than any other. Most recent of these one-upping pronouncements was from the US State Department: the Washington newsletter *Energy Daily* for 9 August quotes a US official to the effect that safeguards provisions in the agreements with Egypt and Israel are 'the most stringent ever incorporated in any nuclear power document'. However, a discomfiting corollary to such assertions is the implication that safeguards provisions in earlier agreements are significantly less stringent.

Such is indeed proving to be the case. After two years of bitter soul-searching Canada failed to persuade India to accept more stringent safeguards. In May 1976 the Canadian Government announced that it was withdrawing further nuclear assistance from India – the first time an exporting country has been prepared to accept the economic consequences of refusing to make nuclear exports. In the US, however, controversy flared over plans to ship some 20 tonnes of enriched uranium reload fuel to the Indian nuclear station at Tarapur, in

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1962 the first US nuclear export to a developing country. A landmark hearing on the Tarapur fuel export took place before the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission on 20-21 July. The Commission's ruling, expected by the end of this month, will mark a fundamental redefinition of US nuclear policy.

Recent US statements have made it possible to anticipate the tenor of the new policy. What US officials most fear is the accumulation of separated plutonium in non-weapons countries. Accordingly, their present pressure is directed toward prevention of the establishment of plutonium recovery – that is, reprocessing – in these countries. Outline agreement with Iran, for example, has been achieved, according to which Iran will reprocess only under international auspices, or will ship used US reactor fuel back to the US for subsequent management. A similar agreement is being sought with India regarding fuel for Tarapur. (India, it should be noted, has nearly completed a reprocessing plant at Tarapur.)

UK opinion shows signs of favouring a similar approach: reprocessing at Windscale rather than in the customer country. After a brief and unenlightening flurry of discussion in early 1976 the UK Government gave British Nuclear Fuels Ltd the go-ahead to offer reprocessing and plutonium recovery services to overseas customers. A proposed contract for BNFL to reprocess 4,000 tonnes of Japanese nuclear fuel remains unsigned; but the stumbling block seems to be mainly money, rather than such significant details as the eventual future of the 40 tonnes of plutonium which would be recovered. Present UK plans for such overseas reprocessing simply entail returning the recovered plutonium to the customer country, a procedure which hardly satisfies criteria for proliferation control.

In any case, such measures as international reprocessing beg the essential question: is it worth it? Quite apart from the many technical and political roadblocks impeding such arrangements, there remains the probability that even on its own terms nuclear electricity is not, and will never be, an economic way to supply energy, even to industrialised countries. Certainly – as the Barber report makes clear – nuclear electricity is supremely irrelevant to developing countries, except as a form of technological colonisation which will make them permanently dependent on supplier countries. It can therefore be argued that civil nuclear technology has been an aberration: well-meant, initially promising, but ultimately too difficult, too expensive and too dangerous a course to follow.

The UK, which can fairly claim to have led the world into the nuclear age, now has a unique opportunity for leadership in a fresh direction. Clearly the process must be gradual; but it must be begun. The Government should think again about plans to expand the floundering UK nuclear industry. The resources thus earmarked should be re-allocated in other directions offering more employment, more efficient use of indigenous UK resources, and more promise for export: advanced coal technology (in which the UK is a world leader), solar heating and cooling, heat pump technology – the list could be extended indefinitely.

Rather than planning to expand, the UK nuclear industry should plan to contract, over a period of years; past activities have already left a legacy of sufficient problems to keep the industry busy through a lengthy programme of phasing out. Reprocessing and separation of plutonium from oxide fuel is not presently being carried out; it should not be restarted. Instead, work should be undertaken to determine the optimum method of long-term management of the existing stocks of used oxide fuel, with its plutonium content, of the existing stocks of separated plutonium, and of the 700 cubic metres of high-level radioactive waste now stored at Windscale. Needless to say, any proposal to build a full-size plutonium-fuelled fast breeder reactor should be shelved. Existing nuclear power stations will require reload fuel and maintenance throughout their operating lives, and Magnox fuel – which deteriorates in water storage – will probably require reprocessing; there will not, therefore, be any rapid loss of employment from existing nuclear facilities.

In any case, redirection of emphasis away from nuclear electricity – one of the most capital-intensive of all industrial activities – will enhance rather than detract from employment. With such a fundamental shift in its domestic energy policy, the UK will then be able to move into the world market for energy technology, offering a credible alternative to nuclear exports. If favourable financing can be offered for nuclear exports,

it can also be offered for non-nuclear alternatives – with more economic justification.

It could happen – particularly if UK policy-makers take seriously the responsibility which their present opportunity offers. On past performance, however, the prospects do not look very propitious. The momentum of the international nuclear juggernaut may already be impossible to overcome. On 19 January 1976 the US Senate's Government Operations Committee heard testimony from David Lilienthal, who from 1946 to 1950 was the first chairman of the US Atomic Energy Commission. Mr Lilienthal did not mince words:

The tragic fact is that the atomic arms race is today proceeding at a more furious and more insane pace than ever. Proliferation of capabilities to produce nuclear weapons of mass destruction is reaching terrifying proportions. We have to decide now what we can do, now, within our own capabilities, to prevent a very bad situation from becoming a disastrous and inevitable one. I therefore propose as a private citizen that this Committee, with its great prestige, call upon the Congress and the President to order a complete embargo to the export of all nuclear devices and all nuclear material, that it be done now and done unilaterally.

If a great number of countries come to have an arsenal of nuclear weapons, then I'm glad I'm not a young man, and I'm sorry for my grandchildren.

It is a bleak and chilling epitaph for the 'peaceful atom'.

Corinna Adam

Man About the House

Mrs Granby is a 55-year-old widow who lives in London's East End. She is very far from being an old dear; she belongs, with her beautifully coiffed hair, sharpish tongue and beringed fingers to quite another recognisable type. She 'takes pride' in her appearance, her rings, her furniture – and her dog. They are what matter. But that is not the view taken by the local Supplementary Benefit Tribunal. They think that the most important part in her life is played by one Mr Baker, the lodger. They have decided that she is cohabiting with him, and stopped her benefit.

Now this would be only one of thousands of borderline cohabitation cases dealt with by the appeals tribunal every year, only one of hundreds which come into the hands of the Child Poverty Action Group or the Citizens' Rights Office. But Mrs Granby is in a completely Tweedledum-Tweedledee position, as two social security tribunals have reached contrary decisions on her case, on just the same facts. The National Insurance Tribunal have decided she is *not* cohabiting, and pay her widow's pension of £13.30 a week. The SB people believe that she *is* living with Mr Baker as his common-law wife, and have refused to make up her allowances to the 'social need' level of £18.90.

To the outsider, there is something comic-

ally ironic about the sight of two lots of bureaucrats with their horns locked in such a way. To Mr Baker and Mrs Granby it is distressing and impoverishing. Mr Baker has moved out, to his son's place. Mrs Granby is so angry and upset ('had to get meself pills from the doctor') that she hasn't yet decided what to do. And the situation isn't helped by the all-round suspicion that someone has been snooping and 'told the inspectors', perhaps because they are jealous of Mrs Granby; perhaps out of sheer generalised spite.

Mr Baker had been a friend of the Granbys for years, and knew them both even after they separated in 1969. Before then, the three of them had agreed that when the great day came, and the Granbys got to the top of the council list, Mr Baker could move in too as a lodger. It seems that the tentative agreement was acknowledged by the GLC; it was honoured by Mrs Granby when she moved to her present address in 1973. The trouble started when Mr Granby died in April 1975, and Mrs Granby belatedly applied for widow's benefit in December last year. Then, as the jargon has it, 'information was received that the claimant was cohabiting with a man as his wife'.

The second piece of evidence on which the Supplementary Benefits Commission re-

lied (apart from the agreement to live in the same flat) was an 'interview' with Mr Baker at his place of work at 6 o'clock one morning when he arrived to start the early shift – the special investigating officer having followed him from his lodgings. Mr Baker was 'completely bewildered' as to why he should be approached but agreed that yes, he had come from that particular address. The Supplementary Benefits Commission decided that the couple were 'cohabiting' and refused benefit. *On the basis of that decision*, the National Insurance Tribunal refused to pay Mrs Granby's widow's pension. All she had now was Mr Baker's £6-£7 a week rent: the rent of the flat alone is £8.

Mrs Granby appealed (represented by the CPAG). Meanwhile, yet another inspector had called – this time from the National Insurance Tribunal, and this time they made their own judgment on his report. It has all the essential flavour of humiliating interference into the trivialities of people's lives. He noted the lodger's single bed, chair and easy chair, clothes, a washing-up bowl with water still in it, cup, knife and fork still on the table. He noted Mr Baker's personal habits – that he went out alone to the pub in the evenings when not on night shift, did his own washing and cooking (sometimes in Mrs Granby's kitchen). Mrs Granby kept her 'valuables' and clothes locked in her bedroom: there were no signs of 'male occupancy', but he remarked, as his predecessor from the Supplementary Benefit Commission had done, that she had a double bed.

But this time the National Insurance Tribunal was satisfied that none of all this amounted to sufficient evidence of cohabitation – and, in direct contradiction of the views of their Supplementary Benefit colleagues, they restored Mrs Granby's widow's pension. (Were she not classified as 'cohabiting', her needs would be assessed at £18.90, lodger or no lodger. So she is losing £5.60 a week.)

Evidence of cohabitation is supposed to be evidence of a situation comparable to that of the average married man and wife, which is a facer for a start. To do them justice, the Supplementary Benefits Commission officially realise this – that is, that there can be no satisfactory generalisation about sex, or the exchange of money, between a couple. But they still have to make such generalisations. In the case of younger women, evidence of sexual relations seems to play the strongest part in their belief, encouraged by local gossip, that a woman is being 'kept' by any man who stays at all regularly in her house. With older women, it is the financial side which seems to matter more: how much does he contribute, and how regularly? (Mr Baker's entries in Mrs Granby's rent book were for £6 to £7 a week, but he sometimes paid up to £15 altogether – for food, or electricity, they say; not for a share of her bed. The figure of £6 a week basic struck the NI tribunal, incidentally, as uneconomically low.) But in all cases more evidence than sex/money is supposedly required – a child, a shared family life, the woman's assumption of the man's name. None of these exist in Mrs Granby's case.

By having moved out, to his son's place, Mr Baker might be considered to have

somehow admitted his guilt, although he swears that he only did so to save Mrs Granby trouble. He is fond enough of his son and daughter-in-law, but would prefer to move back to Mrs G's. He is a solitary man in some ways, and the strange privacy of his life there suits him. There is another reason. The first time a nosy neighbour noticed that he stayed overnight was some weeks before he actually moved in. He had been working late, putting up wire netting round the yard so that Mrs Granby's puppy could be let out without any danger of its running away. Mr Baker has a dog, too, which Mrs Granby is happy to have around and look after. His daughter-in-law thinks it messes up her place, and the sooner he gets rid of it the better.

Donald Gould

'Miracle' in the Sky

A few mornings ago, during the course of that chummy, jokey, all-purpose, get-up-and-shave-to-the-sound-of-real-human-voices, BBC Radio-4 ragbag and brantub show, *Today*, we were told the story of an elderly British emigrant to Australia, who, blind for years, apparently had his sight restored in a miraculous fashion.

This ancient – he was over 80 – had decided to make a flying visit to the Old Country before finally retiring to that great outback in the skies where good Aussies fetch up and the saloons never close. During the course of the long flight from there to here he suffered, as so many of us do on aeroplanes, from poppings and cracklings and achings in the ears. The air pressure changes in the cabin, as the plane repeatedly moved up and down from ground to stratosphere, were playing havoc with the delicate system of tubes and chambers and membranes of his hearing machinery.

But, in addition to the noises and discomfort, he became aware of a wondrous happening. It seemed to him, although he thought he must have been deluded, that he was beginning to see, for the first time in many a long day. It was nothing much at first. He saw men as trees, walking. And he decided to keep his own counsel, fearing that if he told his travelling companion what was happening, his sensations would be put down to the heady effective of an adventurous journey on an old man's mind. But when the flight ended at Heathrow, the restoration of his vision had not only persisted but improved. Some kind of miracle really did seem to have occurred. And he announced the fact to amazed and delighted friends and relatives, and proved to them that he really could see.

It was a pleasure to listen to the old gentleman telling his story on the radio. For him this final, sentimental journey had truly turned out to be the journey of a lifetime. He was happy to believe that the

Lord may have smiled upon him, but he wasn't really bothered about finding an explanation. He was content that the thing had happened.

But something like 3 million Britons had listened to his tale, and it is certain that a good proportion of them must have seized upon it as proof positive that the age of miracles is not past. And if the good Australian emigré, or his friends, had happened to be Catholics, and had happened to have prayed at any time within the past few years, for the restoration of his sight, whichever holy ghost they might have prayed to for the favour would have got the credit for the wonderful result.

In fact there is a simple and strictly material explanation for the 'miracle'. The old Australian was blind because of cataracts. The lenses of his eyes had become opaque. Lenses like that can readily be dealt with by surgeons, so that there was no need for the man to have suffered his blindness at all. Anyhow, he did so suffer, but during the air journey the constantly changing pressures acting upon the various cavities of his body (including his eyeballs) had dislodged the diseased and ill-anchored lenses from their proper place behind the pupil, so that they fell backwards into the cavity of the eyeball. And he could see again.

It's a well-known phenomenon. Rare, but well-known. And it is a little surprising that the highly professional *Today* team didn't see fit to wrinkle out some ophthalmologist from his bed to tell all about it on their cornflake-and-go-to-work programme. But they didn't.

Harry Edwards, who is Britain's, if not the world's, most famous faith healer, claims to his credit the cure of a blind man by an exactly similar sort of happening. The first recorded cure of this sort which I know of is set out in the Gospel according to St. Mark:

And He took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the town; and when He had spit on his eyes, and put his hands upon him, He asked him if he saw aught. And he looked up, and said, I see men as trees walking.

After that He put his hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up; and he was restored, and saw every man clearly.

What Jesus had done was to dislocate the blind man's clouded lenses back into his eyeballs. Clever Jesus. And so much for miracles, say I.

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NEW STATESMAN

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London Diary

□ The political situation in South Africa closely resembles that in Europe before the revolutions of 1848. Then the autocratic government recognised that troubles were coming but thought that autocracy would last their time. Similarly I have often been told by white South Africans that they could hold on to their privileged position until the end of the century. They counted on white solidarity throughout the world. Instead the white world is no longer ready to fight a race war. South Africa jettisons Rhodesia; soon the white world will jettison South Africa, despite its supposed value as a naval base against the Russians. Moreover the native population are no longer alone. Colour no longer means weakness, and the threat of cutting Europe's oil supplies will do more than liberal principles have ever done. Of course liberal principles are, as always, the right answer. It is probably too late to apply them in Rhodesia. The white South Africans still have time. They can secure for themselves a peaceful, if less privileged, future. As an historian I can only repeat my invariable prophecy: 'If men behave in the future as they have in the past, so-and-so will happen.' If the white South Africans continue on their present course, they face a future of disturbance and violence. In the end, after much bloodshed, they will lose and South Africa will cease to be a white man's country. Speed the day.

□ Libel cases do not need rain and we are promised a rich crop in the autumn. They will provide good reading. But do we need our libel laws at all? Of course a man is entitled to protect his reputation, but the best way of doing this is to have a good one. Captain Dreyfus in old age was one day playing bridge. His partner commented on a recent spy trial and then, realising whom he was talking to, hastily added: 'I expect there is nothing in it.' Dreyfus replied: 'No smoke without fire.' That is what most people think even if the libel plaintiff is vindicated. Damages for libel have become nonsensical. The only legitimate damages arise where a precise financial loss has been caused, and the plaintiff should have to prove this. I often read in reviews of my books that I am not fit to teach young people. I rely on my record and it has worked out all right. When threatened with a libel case I at once grovel. Everyone knows that I have withdrawn because of the threat and not because what I wrote was unjustified. Lawyers profit from libel cases; newspapers obtain good, free copy. All others would be wise to follow the universal rule: keep out of court at all costs. As a final reflection, it is worth remembering that the offence of libel was invented by the Star Chamber.

□ This is the time of year when people go all over Europe to festivals – Edinburgh, Salzburg, Bayreuth and many others. We can do just as well by staying in London. For the last fortnight the Summer Music Festival has been running on the South

Bank. Each year it has a predominant theme – this year the chamber music of Schumann and Mendelssohn. Nowadays I listen to chamber music and practically nothing else. The general noise surrounding me – juggernauts, motor-bicycles, jet aircraft, transistor radios – has made me shrink from the noise of symphony concerts. I am a totally uninstructed listener. I cannot read a score; I cannot follow sonata form, let alone a fugue. I am like a man who reads poetry in an unknown foreign language and without any knowledge of the metrical rules. Summer Music is now over and I can only advise any who missed it not to do so next year. As a consolation go to the concerts of the City Music Society which are given in the Bishopsgate Institute every Tuesday at lunch time throughout the winter. I have a personal reason for this recommendation. Though quite unqualified I am President of the Society – one of the few honours I have received and the one I most value. Like all sensible honours it has no duties attached to it, not even that of attending the concerts. I attend them all the same and hope that the audience does not notice the presence of the President.

□ London Transport has brought out yet another revised edition of Country Walks. London Transport does well to keep it conscientiously up to date. If you rely on an old edition you are likely to be confronted with an unexpected motorway and no bridge across it. The books have provided me with many happy days. I have often walked all day along the recommended paths and not met a single human being or, what is more important, a single motor-car, though I was once knocked down by a horse. This was so absurd that I forgot to be frightened. The walks are ten or 12 miles long, which is just right for a Sunday in winter. Most walks are geared to arrive at a pub round about lunch time, and real ale is more likely to be found in the country than in London. My only grumble is that half the walks are south of the river, in Surrey or Kent, and I never cross the river except to attend the places of entertainment on the South Bank. I am told that the key for crossing the river is London Fields, but I cannot believe that such a place exists. I am content with the Chilterns and Epping Forest, to say nothing of the Hertfordshire country in between. Of course there are no mountains, but there is plenty of hard going which keeps me fit for more strenuous activity in the summer. Everyone should try Country Walks, though I suppose the walks would be ruined if they did.

□ The worst of writing a book is that people always ask me what I am going to write next. I reply: 'Do you ask a woman who has just had a baby when she is going to have another one?' Writing a book is very like having a baby. It is great fun when you conceive it – ideas bubbling up, references checked, the opening sentence clear in my mind. Months of labour follow, – not, as with a baby, a few hours. Day after day I turn out my thousand words. Many a day I throw them away again. There are more troubles after the book is born: a contract to fight over, proofs to read, an index to make. Then follow reviews

pointing out the faults and mistakes that I know better than any reviewer. At the moment my desk is clear: one book just out and another practically ready with all my work on it done. And now? I ought to write a brief history of this country, starting with the death of Queen Victoria and ending, I suppose, with the resignation of Harold Wilson. But where is the Macgonachie that Hitchcock always needs for a film, the twist that brings everything to life? My previous books have been written with exhilaration. If I chronicled the end of an empire, as I did with the Habsburg monarchy, I felt that something better had taken its place. When I wrote *English History 1914-1945* I believed that victory and the Attlee government made a triumphant conclusion. Now I feel differently. The incompetence of an arrogant governing class has led the country to decay and ruin. There is not much fun in writing the architectural history of a house that ends with the words: 'The house has now fallen down.'

□ That brings me back to politics. Not because anything is happening but because nothing is. Here is our country on the verge of bankruptcy. The next run on sterling, probable in the autumn, may bring the one-dollar pound. After that will come the one-cent pound. The optimistic promises of a few months ago have not been fulfilled. Nobody is surprised at this, not even those who made the promises. Someone said of the Baldwin government in the 1920s: 'The snores of the Treasury bench resound through the land.' The present occupants of the Treasury bench do not even snore. They sleep placidly and leave us to do the same. That great classic, *The Tale of the Flopsy Bunnies*, opens with the words: 'It is said that the effect of eating too much lettuce is "soporific".' The effect of eating too much lettuce is nothing to that of listening to a speech by the Prime Minister. With this tribute to Jim Callaghan I conclude my contribution to London Diary and switch off my typewriter.

A. J. P. Taylor

This England

Prizes: £1.50 book token for first entry, £1 tokens for others printed. Paste entries on a postcard.

□ A group of farming peers at Westminster decided to ask the bishop whose turn it was to say prayers in the House of Lords to include a petition for rain. They abandoned the plan on noticing in the Order Paper that Lord Kagan, chairman of Gannex raincoats, was to take his seat that very afternoon. – *Jewish Chronicle* (James Sinclair)

□ 'We all need to be stimulated and stretched, and, for example, for young clergy wives it's very hard to be stimulated all the time just by your husband. Half your concentration wanders to whether his surplice is clean, or what on earth to do for lunch!' – Mrs Coggan in *The Times* (Julia Bray)

□ Regions – 12.00: Press Conference. Ferret Down Trousers World Championship and all-England Chicken Flying Championship. Henny Swan, Sudbury, Suffolk. – *UK Press Gazette* (John O'Sullivan)

Familiar Figures-4

Bel Mooney

The Shop Assistant

The Oxford Street stores do not allow you to talk to their staff – 'Only to department heads, and management – after all sales assistants can't talk about the store.' But about themselves? Puzzlement. 'They wouldn't want to – there's not much they could say,' was one reply. But D. H. Evans did not seem to think it was such an impossible notion: that one of those impeccable ladies in black or navy, who stand all day behind counters facing the spending public, could speak more than the familiar words 'Can I help you?'

Miss Campbell likes to help. She could be in any department, in any shop, at almost any time in the last 25 years – ageless, unnoticeable, with her sleek, cropped black hair, 'flyaway' glasses in pale blue, red lipstick, neat straight navy skirt, and navy pullover knitted at night in her flat in south London. She is shy to the point of terror – until she is behind her counter. Then she puts on her own persona, practising what she, just in her thirties, calls 'old-fashioned service' – missing servility by inches of expertise. At D. H. Evans she works in the lingerie department, selling both women, and men buying for women, the most intimate garments.

On the collar of her blouse the badges glint like her spectacles, evidence of the seven courses in corsetry she has taken with ease. That was in successive spring holidays, after she had left school at 16 to work at Gamages. 'You couldn't take courses in work time like you can here, but I was so keen to learn that I gave up my holidays. My father always wanted me to be a nurse, but when I was at school it was underwear that took my interest. And father used to say: "If you do a job, do it well." So I decided to work in a shop, and sell what really interests me.'

When Gamages was liquidated, after she had worked there for nine years, Miss Campbell felt that her world had crumbled: 'A big store like that . . . where I grew up. You think about it, and try to work out the reason for it all. It's tragic.' She was redundant on the Friday, was interviewed at D. H. Evans (where sales assistants' pay ranges from £36 to around £45, with experience) on the Saturday, and started work on the Monday, six years ago.

Since then the routine has been exactly the same, alternating Mondays and Saturdays off, working till seven on Thursdays. She arrives at 8.30, and from 8.40 till 9 a.m. dusts and tidies her counter and stock drawers. All day, punctuated by tea and lunch breaks in the heavily subsidised canteen, the assistants stand on habitually weary feet behind the glass counters that curve in a horseshoe, waiting for the customers.

'You can tell by looking at them what they're going to be like. Some are very shy –

usually the older type of person. Then some will come with their husbands, and walk out of the fitting room half-naked, to see if he likes the bra. That makes me blush – I don't like it at all. Usually someone walks in, and looks around at the different assistants, wondering which of us to choose. You smile. You say, quietly: "Is there anything I can show you?" You mustn't rush them, you have to get round them slowly. Then you take stock out to show them – my golden rule is, no more than six items at a time. More than that confuses the customer. The vital thing is to get them in the fitting room. Then, I say, you've got them caged. You've got their confidence. Winning people's confidence, then sending them away pleased, is the most satisfying thing about the job.'

Once in the discreet fitting rooms, the world reveals its weaknesses to Miss Campbell. First comes vanity. 'Even the young girls ask for the wrong size bra, and get annoyed if you ask to measure them. A little girl came in and asked for a 32B. And she knew her size, thank you very much. I finally got her into a larger cup, a 32D. It looked really nice. Before that she'd been pushed up like a bolster—you could have rested a cup of tea on it! People are so vain. They ask for a girdle of a certain size, take it in the fitting room, and they can't get into it. They struggle and pull and puff, and when I come back I can see them panting, and the weals on the body – and they say: "I'll take it; it'll fit later; I've just had a big lunch." It can't be good for them, cramming themselves in. But you mustn't upset them. Stout people need help.'

Miss Campbell *does* like to help, though sometimes she quails: 'Once in the fitting room they will tell you things. Old ladies tell you about their husbands who've died, and if I see they're going to cry I change the

subject, talk about the weather. Because it upsets me if they cry. Somehow it's so private in there they feel they can tell you almost anything, and sometimes it doesn't seem right . . . to know people's . . . *private* things. You see, you're like a nurse. You see their bodies – and sometimes, how can I put it, the . . . *aroma* . . . is awful. And you see what they're really like in other ways – you see all sorts.' She leans forward with excitement: 'I couldn't do another job ever. My heart's completely in fitting people, and serving them. And most of them are *so* nice.'

Even the men. Many customers in corsetry are men. They come in with their notes from their wives: small and timid men handing the sealed envelope to Miss Campbell, who opens it to read 'Size 46D bra and extra large girdle.' And the young men come in for presents for their girl friends. 'They always want frilly pants and a frilly bra. Frilly – it's always *frilly*. And usually they ask for something red. They seem to like bright colours; it must be . . . more interesting for . . . that side of things.' But apart from the brisk trade in masculine fantasies, especially at Christmas when the clichés reach the frothiest heights, there are other interested men from time to time. These Miss Campbell does not like. They sidle in and walk around for ages, touching things 'Handling the lace,' she says. Sometimes they will approach the assistants, on the pretext of not knowing what to buy for a mythical wife, and ask questions. She purses her lips slightly: 'When they come right out and ask you what you yourself are wearing, you know the truth, and get rid of them as quickly as possible.' She shudders: 'I don't like that at *all*.'

Miss Campbell is conscious of her position. When the scores of rich Arabs come, throwing wads of cash upon the counter 'as if it didn't matter', she is careful to take trouble with the often incomprehensible demands, only perhaps a shade regretful that they are not English. When customers are rude, especially in the hot weather, she smiles all the more. 'If they throw things at me, I just pick them up very slowly and carefully, to make them feel guilty. When they're difficult, you have to be extra nice. I just hold on the parcel extra hard when I hand it to them, so that when they snatch

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it, it falls on the counter, and *they* have to pick it up. When you're paid to be a shop assistant you're paid to serve people. That's all. Not to get irritable, or show that *you* are tired and hot. It's the customers' money that pays you. The customer may not always be right, but you have to act as if she's right. Checking yourself, always being polite – the ability to do that is worth more than all these badges.'

On her second Saturday off, Miss Campbell will go to other stores. She will ask for

things – horrified to notice unhelpfulness; that assistants actually sit *down* behind the counter, do not serve with a smile, even use Christian names. Miss Campbell, who thinks she will be at D. H. Evans until she retires, will never tolerate such familiarity. To her regular customers she is Miss Campbell, and always will be – whose whole heart is in fitting foundation garments; who sits contentedly alone in her flat at night, knitting woolly animals for the hospital, resting her feet.

First Person

Arthur Marshall

Knock, Knock

Though not by any means a devout believer, I do quite frequently pray. To what or to whom I pray I am far from sure but the results are invariably the same and quite totally disastrous. Take my most recent batch of requests, every one of them turned firmly down. Throughout July I prayed for rain. Sickened by England's humiliations, I prayed that we might win the fourth Test Match. I prayed that one of my few remaining molars wasn't as rickety as it felt (my kind Mr Bellamy, on examining it, gave a gasp of horror and tugged it instantly out). And I put in a plea for poor old Mars and for there being evidence of somebody or something somewhere that might reduce the world's chilly isolation.

I haven't much faith in there being anything 'out there', so to speak, but I am glad to report that our Devon station-master now has at least a suspicion. Two agreeable American women friends had been staying with me and, on arrival at the station for their return to London, the ladies could find neither their tickets nor their seat reservations, both obtained from a travel agency. In our distress, we were courteously wafted to the station-master's office, where all was kindness and efficiency and personal attention and where, after a telephone call to the agency, duplicates were provided. By way of explaining their carelessness and their American accents, the elder of my friends leant confidentially towards the station-master, lowered her voice and said: 'We're from the other side, you know.' He looked extremely startled, having obviously understood the words as 'the Other Side'. My friends, both comfortably chunky ladies and wearing good serviceable macintoshes, didn't look like what the world considers to be ghosts, but you never know. By this time, the younger one had been stung on the cheek by an angry wasp and, swiftly swelling up, resembled a lopsided red balloon. Did wasps sting ghosts? Who could say? Who could pronounce with certainty on anything in the spirit world?

Well, quite a lot of people have thought that they could. The entire field of psychical research is now opened to us by Alfred Douglas (nothing at all to do with Oscar's noble chum) who, remaining scrupulously

objective, examines in *Extra-Sensory Powers* (Gollancz £6.95) every facet. Before we get down to the actual table-rapping we find that history is dotted with rum and inexplicable occurrences. St Francis could, as we know, take off and hover in the air, beech-tree high. Mysterious and mesmeric Dr Mesmer, dressed from head to foot in a rather trying shade of violet, used to prod patients with an iron rod and produce contagious convulsions, with the entire consulting-room excitingly a-twitch. Nobody seems to have bothered much about spiritualism until 1840 when an American went into what must have seemed rather a prolonged trance and dictated a massive 800-page work entitled *The Principles of Nature*, and from then on trances were all the rage.

By 1853 there were 40,000 Spiritualists in New York alone and the din of the table-rapping and ringing of hand-bells, both popular spirit pastimes, must have been deafening. In London the Brownings attended a séance in Ealing, and a ghostly hand, after shooting up through the table-top and placing a garland of flowers on Elizabeth's head, had then drifted out of the window and into Hopcroft Avenue. Elizabeth, much impressed, flashed the news

by letter to Wimpole Street. Robert, on the other hand, went home and wrote his derogatory poem, *Mr Sludge, the Medium*. Can it be that women are in general more gullible or, to put it more politely, more impressionable, accessible and sensitive?

It would certainly seem so. Most mediums have been female, and in a serious article such as this we must all strive to forget Miss Hermione Gingold, in crumpled brown velvet and beads, in that Gate revue:

I'm only a medium medium.

I do it to relieve my tedium.

There was Florence Cook (subsequently caught cheating) who insisted, and understandably, on subdued lighting, whose *tour de force* was a curtained alcove at which Eastern heads, all whiskers and turbans, appeared, and who tended to get friendly with male séance-attenders ('Do you squeeze?'). There was Kate Wingfield, a pioneer crystal-gazer, whose specialities were lengthy messages, tirelessly rapped out, from the dead, and the diagnosis of illnesses ('Do watch that chest of yours!') among her sitters. This, at least, was a useful accomplishment for so often mediums' achievements were merely idiotic and nobody's more so than those of Eusapia Palladiso, who shunted about the Continent creating havoc wherever she went. No sooner had her séances started than chairs and tables danced about and broke, curtains billowed out, guitars twanged, noises like pistol-shots rang out, invisible hands pinched the sitters, and every cup and saucer in the room shattered into smithereens. Nerves were hardly calmed by Eusapia's ceaseless banging of her tambourine and her loud cackles of maniacal laughter. Alas, she too was caught cheating, supplying loud rapping noises by kicking the table-leg with her sturdy Italian boots, and when outraged sitters attempted to hold her down she 'acted in an overtly erotic manner': and all this in Cambridge too, with the famous magician J. N. Maskelyne present, Eusapia having first, to allay suspicions of trickery, paraded about in her stays and a short petticoat.

Despite such disappointments and let-downs, the novelty caught on, and in some very surprising quarters. A distinguished lecturer in classics at Newnham received messages through 'automatic writing' (messages in Greek and Latin, natch). E. W. Benson, later Archbishop of Canterbury, founded a Ghost Society. Ouija boards shot about all over the place supplying singularly literary words of comfort ('Rest, weary heart!'). A. J. Balfour, a future Prime Minister, took a lively interest in the quaint goings-on. The Frogs got going with planchette. Radclyffe Hall and her sidekick, Una, Lady Troubridge, muscled in. And, most fervent of all, there was Sir Oliver Lodge who, though dead, obligingly popped back again in 1969 with a medium called Mrs Osborne Leonard, and not a stone's throw from Peter Jones.

Thrilling stop-press news. My prayer about Mars seems to be about to be answered, if in a rather minor way. It appears that there may be an organism there which, if fed with the right stuff, may then give out a sound resembling the tiniest of burps. If it then says 'Pardon', we're really on to something.



Letters to the Editor

Race, Racism and Truth

Sir, As a racist, that is one who confesses to racial preference, I should like to comment on Mervyn Jones's article (NS 30 July) in which he writes that the National Front is a conspiracy against truth and that people support it because they are being conned and lied to. The 'five specific allegations against the minorities' voiced by National Front members amount to a belief that 'immigrants get first choice' in the matter of jobs and social benefit. Such Alf Garnett statements are roughly expressed but they do reflect the concern of the indigenous British over the attempts of successive governments to foist racial integration upon us. The fourth and last piece of legislation passed with this object is one which calls for no 'hair-splitting argument', since we have no choice in the matter.

Mr Jones's argument seems to rest on the legal and not the moral rights of immigrants. Let's get matters straight: the Government may issue a document conferring British citizenship on anyone; that does not make the recipient ethnically British. It is the latter meaning of the word which is understood by Mr Jim Merrick, and the accusation of falsehood against him is thus out of order. The claim to have trapped him in one or two logical errors is easy scoring for one who dislikes exclusively ethnic British hegemony over these islands.

Readers of the Race Relations Board's publication *Equals* will have noticed the occasional veiled threat – that if more political power is not accorded to minority groups then increased social strife may result. British respect for the enacted law and our fear of the accusation of racial prejudice have until recently stifled discussion of racial problems, but this does not amount to true acceptance of multi-racialism. Politicians and social theoreticians would have been wise to heed the first startling pronouncements of Mr Enoch Powell some years ago when he warned of the potential dangers of permitting large-scale immigration into this country. Now our legislators must endeavour to sort out the worsening situation, which will undoubtedly be aggravated if thousands of other would-be immigrants arrive here who are 'entitled' to do so. Where will they all be housed and employed? Yet many of our school leavers' introduction to the wider world is now a transit from the gymnasium to the dole queue!

The most recent Act of race legislation gives almost Gestapo powers to officials to enter premises for the purpose of inspecting employment registers and to require that people of non-British origin be employed in proportion to their numbers. A Briton, suspected of behaviour springing from racial prejudice (or preference), can be summoned before a committee of the Race Relations Board, constituted of both whites and blacks, who will decide whether or not to institute legal proceedings against him. An immigrant with British legal status is enfranchised whether or not he has any acquaintance or sympathy with this country or can even speak English. This right has been bestowed upon him by an ancient Parliament which has taken centuries to enfranchise us. The full range of social services becomes available to him – services which we have been taxed for years to maintain. In the name of reason, what are these but examples of advantageous treatment?

The next step in the race mixers' progress towards destruction of our racial and cultural heritage might well be compulsory racial inter-marriage. This would spell the end of the British as a distinct people in a few generations.

We in the National Front have the moral (and fight for the legal) right to defend this heritage.

KEITH BROWN

6 Cleveland Place East
Bath, Somerset

Clever Tom Driberg

Sir, Having known the late Tom Driberg, or, as he certainly enjoyed becoming, Lord Bradwell, a little, I was greatly interested in Mr Taylor's remarks about him in your last issue. I am interested to learn from Mr Taylor, who knew him well for many years and is so well qualified to pronounce upon such matters, that he was not clever, nor an intellectual.

Without Mr Taylor to guide me, I should have thought Tom Driberg a very clever man. For one thing, he was a supremely good low journalist. Much of the success of Beaverbrook Newspapers is due to him, for he, during his William Hickey period, invented a style which countless others copied. When Housman died in 1936, Tom Driberg's paragraph about him bore the headline 'Sad Old Lad'. That may not be great wit, but it is rather clever; and it is a fair specimen of Driberg's columnar art.

In conversation Driberg did not give me quite the impression of an innocent high churchman and lover of humanity which Mr Taylor's account seems to convey. He had, it is true, beautiful manners; but even in the atmosphere of this college-cum-cathedral, different from his usual haunts, in which I used to encounter him, one noticed a feline suppleness of intellect which seemed to indicate the presence of keen intelligence. If you will not think it rude of me to mention it, I do not usually take kindly to high churchmen, socialists or homosexuals; and yet I greatly liked Tom Driberg, and much enjoyed his company. When I think of what 'intellectual' usually means among your high-minded readers, I am relieved to learn from Mr Taylor that Driberg was not really an intellectual after all.

HUGH LLOYD-JONES

Christ Church
Oxford

Sir, Mr Taylor suggests that the refusal of the Conservatives to make political use of the known homosexuality of another party's MP 'is a tribute to the decency of British public life'.

Claptrap. There could hardly be a clearer tribute to the hypocrisy of the London/Oxbridge Establishment than that it should approve for its own circle conduct it proscribes for others; unless, of course, it is your Diarist's assumption of the virtue of necessity.

RHYS BURRIS

37 Wellington Square
Oxford

Sir, I happen to have been at school with the late Tom Driberg. I remember very well the manner in which he regularly walked out of chapel. He would turn his head towards the altar and treat it to a familiar nod; quite unmistakably not a reverent bow.

This ill-natured reminiscence is prompted by obituary references (e.g. A. J. P. Taylor, *London Diary*, 20 August) to Driberg's 'devout' churchmanship. Observing his career in politics, I always supposed that he took care to preserve his ecclesiastical connections as one of his bolt-holes in case of times getting really nasty for Leftists.

E. P. MERRITT

77 College Gardens
Grand Avenue
Worthing

Sir, Tom Driberg's pioneering agit-prop work for the Communist Party at Oxford, revealed last week by A. J. P. Taylor, was continued when he abandoned the dreaming spires for (dare I say it?) the gleaming quires of Fleet Street. In the very early Thirties, before the rise of Hitler and the Spanish civil war brought a rush of intellectuals to the communist ranks, the Party cell in the *Daily Express* office, consisting of a process-worker, a stenographer and myself, a journalist, was agreeably surprised by the addition of the up-and-coming gossip columnist William Hickey to our strength. What would Beaverbrook have thought, and done, had he known of it? And what would we, the original trio, have thought had we known that our comrade would end his days in the odour of Anglican sanctity and with a seat in the Lords in the name of Baron Bradwell juxta Mare?

WILLIAM FORREST

19b East Heath Road
Hampstead, NW3

The Critic as Vandal

Sir, I have been interested by the letters which 'The Critic as Vandal' (NS 6 and 13 August) has provoked. Perhaps I may be allowed a brief reply. Professor Empson seems to me to have overlooked my main argument. Put simply, it is this: if we accept that 'form' and 'content' are indissolubly fused in a work of literature, then it follows that all rewording is misrepresentation. From this it further follows that a book like *Seven Types*, which is full of rewording, must be full of misrepresentation. I am disappointed that Professor Empson cannot bring himself to agree. I did not, of course, use the words 'dishonest' or 'cheat' about him: these are his rewordings – though I confess I feel it less than candid of him to pretend, in his letter, that Mr Kerrigan's interpretation of *Samson Agonistes* was intended as a joke. When he comes to read Mr Kerrigan he will find that this is, alas, not so.

Professor Ricks accurately places the remark of his, which I quoted, in its context. The fact remains, however, that he, not the critic he alludes to, was responsible for introducing the word 'genocide' into his account of *Samson*, and he gave no inkling that it was in any sense an inaccurate word to use about the events of the drama. In these circumstances it seems to me a perfectly valid example for my purposes.

On a wider issue, he speaks of 'professionalised consciencelessness' in reading literature. How far the conscience can or should be aroused by fictions is, I agree, an intriguing question, and too complicated, no doubt, for full discussion here. But plainly the conscience cannot reasonably respond to fiction as it would to life, otherwise we might refuse to read *Samson* at all, on the same grounds as we would refuse to go and see a theatre fall on its audience. Critics conscience-stricken about *Samson* should perhaps remember that no one actually gets hurt during their reading of the piece, unless they happen themselves to be sitting uncomfortably. On the other hand, a reader's conscience may usefully be engaged in keeping him from misrepresentation of what his author has written.

Professor Freedman's letter, though wide-ranging, is at times hard to follow. In particular some readers may assume, from his use of the word 'editing', that Dryden's *Troilus and Cressida*, to which I referred, is an edition of Shakespeare's play. This, as Professor Freedman will know, is not the case. Dryden rewrote Shakespeare, and his version drove Shakespeare's original from the stage for the whole of the 18th century. Whether Dryden's play is superior to Shakespeare's is, like all literary 'value-judgements', a matter of personal opinion. For myself, I do not think it is.

Finally, Mr Edwards points out, in a cogent letter, that I have myself been guilty of critical rewording. He is certainly right, and I was quite aware of this (and of the likelihood of its being pointed out) when I wrote my lecture. It does not seem to me odd, though, that one should progress, or try to progress, in one's thinking, by having doubts about what one has previously thought and written. Indeed, I imagine that is the way most people do proceed, unless they have stopped thinking altogether. That I should have chosen my examples from 'eminent figures of 20th-century criticism', rather than from my own books, may seem to Mr Edwards a poor show. But their eminence was, as I explained, a vital part of the case, and was meant to carry more weight than any breast-beating I might myself have embarked on.

JOHN CAREY

Merton College
Oxford

Sir, I call William Empson a cheat (Letters 13 August) and I gratefully acknowledge that my own reading of poetry has been a 'practically deranging' experience. I think this is the purpose of poetry. It is, in fact, why Mr Empson is a cheat (and a vandal) when he rearranges poetry, very practically robbing his readers of the experience the poet has offered them.

His paraphrase of John Carey's argument, and his interpretation of it as a 'counsel of despair' is so precisely the opposite of Mr Carey's meaning that his letter serves as a striking reinforcement of this excellent article.

HELEN FROST

49 Church Street
Isleworth, Middlesex

Sir, It is possible to reword without destroying. I refer Professor Carey (Oxford) to Señor Borges's account, in *Labyrinths*, of my pioneering work in this field.

PIERRE MENARD

c/o Rudolf
23 Fitzwarren Gardens, N19

Leonid Plyushch

Sir, We would like to draw the attention of your readers to a meeting we are organising on 27 November in the Central Hall, Westminster, at which Leonid Plyushch will make his first statement to the British public.

Leonid Plyushch, a young Ukrainian mathematician and socialist, was interned for two and a half years in the Dnepropetrovsk psychiatric prison and subjected to particularly unpleasant forms of psychiatric 'treatment'. His 'crime' had been to criticise the repression of others in letters to the Soviet press and to draw attention to shortcomings in Soviet society in an open and public manner. His release was secured by the perseverance of his wife and friends in the USSR and by the sustained interest of professional colleagues and human rights activists in France and elsewhere. Their efforts finally resulted in this statement in the French Communist Party newspaper *L'Humanité* of 25 October 1975:

If it is true, and unfortunately so far the proof of the contrary has not been provided, that this mathematician has been interned in a psychiatric hospital solely because he took up a position against certain aspects of Soviet policy, or against the regime itself, we can only confirm, with the greatest sharpness, our total disapproval and the demand that he be liberated as soon as possible.

There are many things that disturb us about this case. We will mention three here. (1) The fact that such mild expressions of criticism as those of Plyushch should have been punished so savagely and in a way which involves a

dangerous perversion of medical ethics; (2) Our fears for other, less fortunate, victims who are still suffering in the same way; (3) The fact that a number of leading Western psychiatrists apparently regard Soviet practice in these cases acceptable, either out of appeasement or perhaps, because they, too, regard non-conformity as insanity. We must ensure that the psychiatric abuses which occur in this country are not allowed to develop into a state-sponsored mechanism for internment of dissenters like that in the Soviet Union.

We believe it is important for us to make our position on these matters as clear as our opposition to torture in Brazil or Uruguay. We welcome donations, co-sponsorship (with or without financial commitment) from CLP's, trade unions and other bodies, free publicity and other forms of assistance. We will be happy to supply any further information required.

DAVID SIMPSON
Amnesty International
British Section

JOHN COBB

Association of Psychiatrists in Training

CHRIS FARLEY

Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation

HENRY V. DICKS

Campaign Against Psychiatric Abuses

MARK JENKINS

Greater London Tribune Group

TONY SMYTHE

MIND (National Association for
Mental Health)

55 Theobald's Road
London WC1

Tricky Conspirators

Sir, A. J. P. Taylor's mention (London Diary 20 August) of the 'Anglo-French aggression at Suez' 20 years ago brings back memories. But the conspirators, as he says, bungled the operation; an operation which, Mr Taylor might have added, included a plan, revealed on commercial television some months ago, to assassinate President Nasser and for which the services of the American CIA were sought by the British government.

That the project was rejected by that pillar of the American Establishment as 'too tricky' detracts far less from their reputation for highly professional gangsterism than from the Conservatives' image of moral integrity so wearisomely presented to the British people at the time of general elections – if at no other. The principle that the end justifies the means is recognised by so many governments as to have become almost respectable. But the British electorate must realise that there are some very well defined limits!

E. J. GRIFFITH

222 Old Church Road
Clevedon, Avon

The Times After Thomson

Sir, Reference Tom Baistow's article 'The Times After Thomson' (NS 13 August). Presumably I can be regarded as one of the 'senior Times Newspaper executives', but I am not anxious about the future of *The Times* now that control of the company has passed to Kenneth Thomson.

Perhaps your readers would also feel less anxious for the future of this newspaper if Tom Baistow had quoted more of Sir Denis Hamilton's statement. For instance, Sir Denis also said:

His son, Mr Kenneth Thomson, told me this morning, before leaving for the funeral in Canada, that he and his family are deeply committed to *The Times*. Substantial funds are being made available to re-equip *The Times* and the *Sunday Times* with all the new printing technology, and if all our plans

are implemented, with the support of the staff, it should put *The Times* into profit.

I can assure you, Tom Baistow and your readers that I believe this to be true. One other point. The editor of *The Times* enjoyed complete editorial independence under Lord Thomson, as I did in the editor's absence. I have no reason to believe that this will change under Kenneth Thomson's stewardship, and certainly Tom Baistow produced no evidence to the contrary.

LOUIS HEREN

Deputy Editor and Foreign Editor

The Times

Gray's Inn Road, WC1

Ireland's Rebels

Sir, Students of Irish population history are indebted to A. J. P. Taylor for calling to their attention (London Diary 20 August) a demographic event to which hitherto they have somehow neglected to give sufficient weight in their calculations. They will be especially anxious to learn details of the new evidence Mr Taylor has uncovered which enables him to reject Thomas Pakenham's estimate of 30,000 dead in the 1798 rebellion (including civilians and soldiers on both sides) in favour of a new death toll of 'half a million Irish'.

No responsible historian – nor, to my knowledge, even an irresponsible historian until your issue of 20 August – has ever suggested a death toll in 1798 remotely approaching 500,000. Historians in this island have their hands full trying to debunk the existing stock of myths without having new myths created by a member of their own profession.

DAVID W. MILLER

Institute of Irish Studies

The Queen's University of Belfast

The Door of No. 10

Sir, With regard to the letter from your correspondent who doesn't believe my statistic about the door of No. 10 (NS 20 August), I should tell you that one day I was standing in the hall and, noticing the continual comings and goings, I said to the doorman that it would be interesting to know how many times the door was opened in a single day. The next day, he and the relief doorman checked by hand counter how many times the door was opened between 6 a.m., when the office cleaners came in, and 11.30 p.m.

This was an average day, with a cabinet meeting and an evening reception for about 100 people (this would account for 200 times if all the guests came and went singly).

The doorman showed me the result – 942 times.

MARY WILSON

St Mary's

Isles of Scilly

Handbags and Virility

Sir, I read with interest A. J. P. Taylor's London Diary piece (NS 20 August) bemoaning the fact that he has no receptacle in which to carry his impedimenta. Now, with the male at last regaining his rightful 'peacock' place in the fashion stakes, it is his own fault that he does not carry a handbag – whether aggressively male in design or not (who cares?). There can be nothing less appealing than a man with pockets bulging out of shapeless clothes.

Handbags are carried by men all over Europe: it is incredible that the scaled-down version of brief-case should cause the men of England such anxieties about their virility.

PETER HESS

281 Lauderdale Tower
Barbican, EC2

The Libya Report

A social, economic and political review of developments in the Libyan Arab Republic

ON THE 1st September tens of thousands of Libyans will pack the streets of Tripoli to celebrate the anniversary of the Libyan Revolution in 1969. It will mark seven years of progress in which the Libyan Arab Republic has been transformed, from a desert kingdom subservient to the Western powers, to become a country in the process of massive industrialisation, and whose people now enjoy the benefits of a comprehensive welfare system providing free education, housing and welfare.

It is not only at home that the Libyan Revolution has made its impact. Within months Libya's new leaders had challenged the big powers—with an ultimatum to Britain and the United States to evacuate their prestige military bases at Tobruk and Wheelus. As the government turned its attention to the multi-national oil companies, they submitted one by one to Libya's demand for participation and subsequently in liaison with other OPEC states to revised prices. In Africa, liberation movements in the Portuguese colonies, Zimbabwe and South Africa soon found that the Libyan Revolution had provided them with a powerful ally.



1st. September 1969-76

ADVERTISEMENT

The Libya Report

Politics

The Revolution was motivated by two principal aspirations: integrity for the country and dignity for its people. These have since become the cornerstone of the philosophy of the Libyan Revolution which became known as the Third International Theory, based on the moral code of Islam. In practice a fundamental concept of socialism is advocated both in man's relations with man, and relations between states and nations.

In reality what does this mean? What does the Third International Theory mean in terms of government policy, the individual Libyan citizen and international affairs?

National integrity: The expulsion of foreign bases from Libyan territory was considered a priority. Although those affected were Western powers, the principle has ensured that no other powers have been granted military facilities. Similarly, the multi-national oil companies held enormous powers and privileges under agreements with the former regime. Subsequently they were forced to accept a new relationship with the host country, on the basis of participation with a minority holding.

Individual dignity: An immediate task for the new government was to ensure that the country's wealth accruing from its oil resources was used for the benefit of all the people and not for a privileged elite. The wealth of the nation has been channelled into massive programmes for housing, education, social services and medical care. By government decree not only has a minimum wage been introduced, and frequently revised, but industrial democracy established both through people's councils, and also through partnership of capital and labour, with workers receiving a share of the profits.

Power and democracy: The aim of the Revolution has been to develop a system of people's democracy based on the decentralisation of power to people's committees. In a society largely denied even basic educational opportunities until the revolution the task is formidable, but the Revolution Command Council has now established the basis for such a system.

International Relations: Libyan policy is seen as 'positive neutralism, non-alignment and peaceful co-existence'. Nations are urged to reject the mili-

tary alliances of East and West. As a first step the Libyan Government has proposed that the Mediterranean should become a neutral zone, free from the presence of all foreign military powers. Although strongly pacifist in principle, armed struggle is considered necessary to confront colonialism perpetuated by military force. In addition, Libya has aligned with the struggle of the Third World for economic justice through the realisation of fair commodity prices.

The Libyan Revolution, widely maligned in the West and by other regimes, who see its implementation as a threat to their positions and influence, is a challenge to existing order: a rejection of the manipulation of the Third World by the Great Powers and international corporations, and a demand that power should lie firmly with the people rather than concentrated in the hands of centralised and authoritarian governments.

If the Libyan Revolution is extremist, as its critics claim, the extremes are in terms of moral values, and the contrasting definitions held by the Revolution and its opponents as to what is right and wrong.

Creating a New Democracy



Young Libyans obtain a good view of recent celebrations in Tripoli from the top of a billboard proclaiming Libya's non-alignment and independence from both the East and the West

WHEN ELECTIONS were held in Libya during November and December last year, as part of the process of forming a new national assembly, they marked a further important development in the country's political system. They were also a further initiative by the Revolution Command Council to lay the foundations for a 'people's democracy' which will finally assume power from the RCC headed by Col. Muammer Gaddafi.

Since the 1st September Revolution in 1969, Libya has been moving through a transition period. Last year, on the sixth anniversary of the Revo-

lution, Col. Gaddafi stressed, 'The transition period will witness the laying of the foundations of popular, democratic rule. It will not be a period of dictatorship, or restricting freedoms or suppressing people, as fascist military regimes are doing in certain parts of the Third World.'

The concept of 'people's power' was first advocated by the Libyan leader in April 1973, when Col. Gaddafi urged the creation of People's Committees 'in every village, city, faculty, institute, harbour, airport, and popular organisation'. As a result some 2,000 committees were formed.

the aim being to make leaders at all levels of society answerable to those who elected them.

One year later, Prime Minister Jalloud called for an escalation of the popular revolution, urging Libyans to replace ineffective committees. He also referred to the need for 'peaceful democratic' action. Citizens, he said, must 'rise to their responsibilities to ensure that the struggle is a peaceful one'. Col. Gaddafi told a rally at Misurata that the revolution had created 'no ivory towers, no classes, no masters and servants, but free people who are all masters'.

Last November the process of electing 270 local 'conferences' began. Premier Jalloud told a German interviewer: 'We do not understand democracy as the domination of one specific class, party or parties as in the case of communist and capitalist systems, but as the exercise of power by the people.'

The elections were planned to re-vitalise the Arab Socialist Union—the country's sole political organisation which embraces persons of differing political stands within the framework of upholding the principles of the Revolution. It was planned to make local influences more effective within the ASU.

Six hundred and eighteen members—three from each local committee—attended the National Congress which opened in January to debate subjects ranging from the budget for the 1976-80 Five Year Development Plan to foreign policy, and from the salary paid to Col. Gaddafi, members of the RCC and Cabinet Ministers to defence. Congress rejected a proposal from Col. Gaddafi that Ministers' salaries should be increased.

Earlier this year Education Minister Dr Mohammed Ahmed Sharif discussed the progress of participation in schools, which are run by a committee of senior students and teachers, while 44 school districts are run by popular committees elected by the population. At university and high school levels participation had been 'very good', and he added that he was 'very pleased with the level of participation of the general public in electing school board committees—of these 95 per cent have proven to be well selected'.

The Libya Report

Profile

Muammer Gadaffi

Profile of an Arab revolutionary

TO MOST people Libya is synonymous with Colonel Muammer Gadaffi, who has been Head of State since the September Revolution in 1969. Of the Arab leaders he is one of the best known, though rarely for reasons which have any foundation in reality.

Certain central issues clearly motivate Col. Gadaffi's thinking and his actions: a fundamental belief in God and Islam as the religion; the cause of Arab unity; a deep and personal commitment to the Palestinian people in their struggle to liberate their homeland; determination to transform Libya into a modern state in which the wealth of the country is shared and political power held by the people.

An insight into Gadaffi—thinker and revolutionary—can be provided by a study of the Libyan leader's comments and writings. In expressing his views, a constant theme can be found in Gadaffi's comments—the need for democracy and justice both in man's relations with man, and on the international scene between states.

Within Libya, Gadaffi has pioneered a new concept of democracy based on power being held by the people. The 1973 Cultural Revolution, as it was termed by the Western media, followed Gadaffi's call for People's Committees 'in every village, city faculty, institute, harbour, airport and popular organisation'. As a result 2,000 committees were created. Last year this was followed with the development towards Popular Committees and a National People's Congress. Government by the people rather than government of the people, is the system advocated in Gadaffi's *Green Book*, published earlier this year.

The Libyan leader writes: 'The system of democracy that is prevalent in the world today endows the member of Parliament with a prestige and immunity which is denied to the general public. The people have been robbed of their authority—an authority which is now wielded and exploited by parliaments.'

Rather than political parties, Libya has developed a system of power-sharing within a single political movement. Gadaffi justifies this system thus: 'A political party represents the interests of only a section of society, and yet in power the party purports to represent all of the people... the system then becomes a dictatorship.' This critique of political parties is aimed not only at the multi-party system, but refers equally to the single party system often adopted in authoritarian states. The dangers of centralised power is a constant theme in Gadaffi's speeches. During a



dialogue with French intellectuals in 1969, Gadaffi warned that 'the most dangerous thing is for society's ownership to be in the hands of government'.

On Communism the following remark reflects Gadaffi's view: 'I can assure you that if communism was the road to the liberation of mankind, I myself would be a communist for this is the path which I seek most sincerely', but, he adds, 'I am quite sure that Arab communists haven't the slightest idea what goes on in Moscow—they may cherish some attractive picture of it in their mind's eye, but it is mere theory existing only in books.'

Of the rightist Muslim brotherhood, he says, 'I do not think that the Muslim Brothers represent a Muslim philosophy in the true sense of the word. They are against socialism, against Arab unity, against Arab nationalism. Islam is a universal religion, and in no circumstances can we permit it to be transformed into some partisan cell.'

In fact, many of the views on religion accredited by the press to Gadaffi are untrue. In Tripoli

earlier this year the Libyan leader spoke to delegates to a Muslim-Christian Dialogue, and dismissed claims that the Middle East war was part of a *Jihad*—or Holy War—against the Jews. 'There is nothing called a *Jihad* between a faithful and another faithful,' he declared.

This does not, of course, dismiss the fact that the Palestine issue is one closest to Gadaffi's heart. He rejects reference of the Palestinians as terrorists, asserting: 'When the word terrorism means legal struggle against colonialism, racism or aggression, then we are not worried about the word terrorism. The word colonialism has a very bad meaning in the Third World, but if you say it in Europe or Britain it has an opposite meaning there. The same applies to the word terrorism, which means help for the Palestinians to realise repatriation and to help the black people to triumph over racism.'

In private, Gadaffi stresses his abhorrence of violence and war, yet he rejects submission to colonialism and oppression. Colonial violence, he believes, must be countered with revolutionary struggle. Since the 1969 Revolution, Libya has signed the nuclear non-proliferation treaty (which Israel has refused to do). Gadaffi is strongly opposed to the NATO and Warsaw Pact military alliances, and their influence in the Mediterranean region. He told an international youth conference in 1973: 'It is regrettable to see the Mediterranean countries of Europe and the Middle East incapable of driving away the threats of destructive war from this area.' The Mediterranean 'should be a sea for trade and communications between continents, and a bridge in the service of humanity.'

In actions, as well as words, Gadaffi attracts a forceful loyalty and admiration. From humble origins—his childhood was typical of the impoverished and frugal life of the desert nomad—Muammer (as he is best known) remains a humble man.

He almost despises prestige—rejecting any title other than 'leader'; he still lives in a modest house with his wife and children. When the western press is claiming his downfall, Gadaffi is usually travelling from one isolated village to another in remote areas of the country, 'dropping in' on unsuspecting families, and listening to their problems and their views.

Unlike most political leaders today, Gadaffi does not depend on an army of bodyguards. His greatest strength and protection is the deep affection of almost every Libyan for the man who overthrew a feudal regime and brought dignity and progress to the country.

The Libya Report

Foreign Affairs

Challenging The Big Powers



Premier Jalloud — a skilled negotiator

WHEN IN January Ambassador Mansur Kikhia took his seat as a voting member of the United Nations Security Council this important body in the world community embraced a powerful advocate of non-alignment and an active campaigner for the Third World cause. Observers agree that he is a skilled and astute Arab diplomat, and his posting as Libya's permanent representative underlines the importance attached by Tripoli to the United Nations.

High-level political delegations are frequent visitors to the Libyan capital. They arrive from West European states, the Eastern Bloc, Africa and elsewhere in the Third World—the diversity of their government's ideologies reflecting the commitment of Libya to its policy of non-alignment. Although relations with the Soviet Union have been strengthened in recent years, ties have been more of a working relationship based primarily on trade links rather than any form of military or economic alliance. Nor, in fact, has the door been closed by the Libyans to closer and more active relations with the United States, though Washington has shown firm reluctance to betray her alliance with Zionist Israel. Libya, for her part, has chosen not to compromise over the issue of Palestine.

Seven years after the 1969 September Revolution which brought Col. Gaddafi and Major Jalloud to power there is no region of the world where bilateral ties have not been forged. Two European powers felt the impact of the revolution more than others—Britain's military presence was expelled and Italy's neo-colonial hold was broken. However, today Italy is again a major trading partner and Anglo-Libyan relations relatively cordial.

However, although Libya has established political and trade ties with most West European countries on a bilateral level, the Tripoli government has refused to participate in the Euro-Arab Dialogue between the EEC and Arab League states until the EEC adopts a joint policy sympathetic to the rights of the Palestinians upheld by the UN.

In foreign affairs the Libyan government has assumed a leading role not only on the pan-Arab level, but also within Africa and the Third World. Here, Libya has two prime priorities—support for national liberation movements and co-operation with the non-aligned nations to bring about a new economic order in the world. Libya openly assisted the liberation movements in Portugal's African colonies, and the independence of Mozambique, Angola and Guinea Bissau was seen to justify Tripoli's record.

Following the Soweto massacres a Libyan spokesman stressed that his country would 'stand by the liberation forces to create a better future for the African people'. Libya, he said, would provide all possible material and financial aid for the purpose.

The responsibilities of the world community in combating injustice were stressed by Ambassador Kikhia when he addressed the UN General Assembly last October. 'Colonialism, exploitation and oppression have not disappeared from our earth. Poverty, hunger and illiteracy are still prevailing characteristics for the majority of the human race,' he stated.

He urged the General Assembly to compare the assumptions of detente with the reality of the world today. Libya would 'welcome with relief the disappearance of the age of confrontation and the coming age of negotiations and dialogue,' he said, adding, 'But, is it not the right of the exploited, whose very existence and daily subsistence are threatened, to ask whether this understanding is really for the benefit of all, for the protection of all, and for the security of all? Or is this a wedding party for the interests of the powerful only, which are alone benefiting from the *status quo*?'

The Libyan Ambassador warned, 'We, the small, do not want to be the underdogs in the world tomorrow. It is therefore within our rights to say now to the big powers that it is in our interests and their own that we should not be left with the impression that the struggle between the deprived majority and the rich minority is inevitable.'

Recognising that the 'rich minority' of industrialised nations will not readily accept the new economic order sought by the Third World, Libya has been active in recent years in seeking to forge closer unity and a working cooperation between the Arab and African states. Linked to the expulsion of British and American military bases from Libya following the 1969 Revolution, and Tripoli's leading role in bringing about a revision in oil prices to permit social and economic development within the country, it is not difficult to understand why Libya is much maligned by the western industrialised nations.

However, if Libya's oil resources are able to provide the funds to help free the Third World from exploitation by the industrialised nations, and assist others like Palestine, Zimbabwe and South Africa to become liberated from colonial settler regimes, the September Revolution will have adequately played its part in the history of mankind.

The Libya Report

Industry

Creating a Modern Industrial State

MODERN INDUSTRIAL states are now emerging throughout the Third World, and Libya is no exception. Textiles, ready-to-wear clothing, refined petroleum and a range of factory processed food-stuffs are now available to the Libyan consumer from recently established factories. New factories open with regularity, and yet the progress of the past seven years since the Libyan Revolution is merely the tip of the proverbial iceberg—the foundations of an exciting and ambitious programme which will enable Libya to compete with the older industrialised nations of Europe in manufacturing and petro-chemicals.

Central to this development is the Republic's oil resources. One of the earliest moves by the new government following the 1969 September Revolution was to resolve that the country's natural resources should be freed from the control of the multi-national oil companies and put at the service of the country. Libya was among the pioneering oil states which demanded majority participation in oil companies operating on Libyan territory, and subsequently achieved realistic prices for her virtually sole exporting commodity.

Although crude oil exports remain a dominant factor in Libya's economy, the trend is towards diversification and a broadening of the country's industrial base. Expansion of the agricultural sector will make Libya almost self-sufficient in meeting food requirements, but the development of refining and petro-chemical industries is making a major contribution towards industrialisation plans.

More than £1.7 billion has been allocated in

the current five year programme for industrial development. Premier Abdul Salem Jalloud said earlier this year that the emphasis of the industrial plan would be to utilise the abundance of raw material resources existing in the Republic. The greatest proportion of the funds allocated for oil and gas exploitation in the current programme is intended to create industries which utilise these resources. Almost half of the total allocation is to be used to establish the petroleum gas industry, while a quarter is reserved to create a synthetic fibres complex. More than £20 million is earmarked in the 1976 budget for the development of the Tobruk and Zawia refineries.

The Zawia refinery came on stream in 1974. The £48 million plant was designed to process 60,000 barrels of oil per day, and immediately expansion plans were announced to increase production to 120,000 b/d. Zawia is primarily responsible for meeting local petroleum requirements, but refineries at Tobruk (220,000 b/d) and Zwaitina (400,000 b/d) will boost Libya's export potential for refined oil.

Premier Jalloud told the People's Congress in January that studies were being carried out to determine future developments in gas derivatives such as chemical fertilizers. He added that Libya is to build up a fleet of oil tankers 'so that we will not always remain at the mercy of the industrialised world.'

Recent discoveries of iron ore deposits have added a new dimension to the country's industrial revolution. Construction of a major smelting

plant at Misurata will commence in 1977 capable of a one million tons a year capacity. Libya hopes eventually to produce between five and eight million tons of crude iron annually as the basis for its heavy industry.

The opening of an iron-smelting steel production plant on the outskirts of Tripoli earlier this year is only one of a range of industrial and manufacturing centres established in recent years. Many of these are related to the expanding agricultural sector. During the past twelve months factories have been inaugurated for a number of products including mineral water, tomato paste, paper bags, wool spinning, furniture, glass, and lime. The £28 million textile plant at Zanzour, west of Tripoli, provides employment for 560 workers and when fully operational will make Libya self-sufficient in textiles for clothing.

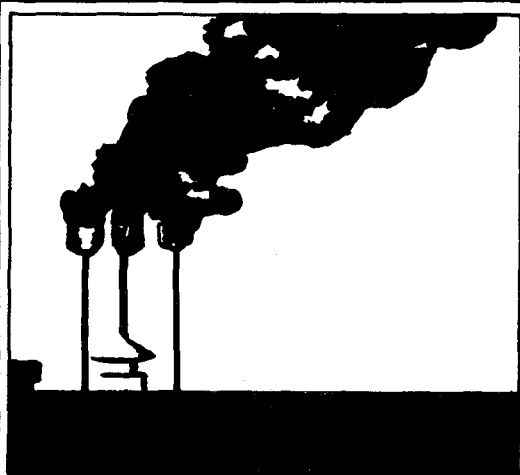
As a consequence of Libya's rapid development, both in industrial projects and urban expansion, the government has allocated £869 million for the electricity sector over the next five years. £187 million is earmarked for 1976 alone. The plan reveals at least twenty-five projects, including the construction of three new power stations announced in January.

Meanwhile, the development and expansion of the industrial sector demands large numbers of skilled personnel. More than £11 million will be spent by 1980 on the provision of industrial training facilities to offer new opportunities for Libyans to benefit from the emerging industrial society.

A Five Year Plan For Development and Social Justice

The Budget for 1976-80 Five Year Development Plan

No.	Name of Sector	1976/80	1976
1	Agriculture and Agrarian Reform	712,473,000	177,737,000
2	Integral Agricultural Development	1,250,080,000	265,344,000
3	Nutrition and Marine Wealth	66,161,600	14,137,000
4	Industry and Mineral Wealth	1,743,604,800	227,992,000
5	Oil and Gas Exploitation	1,037,113,000	144,000,000
6	Electricity	869,832,000	186,536,000
7	Education	752,688,000	179,184,000
8	Information and Culture	146,144,000	31,680,000
9	Manpower	66,878,400	11,758,400
10	Public Health	274,248,000	56,528,000
11	Social Affairs and Social Insurance	69,051,200	15,243,200
12	Housing	1,270,777,600	240,000,000
13	Security Services	56,000,000	16,000,000
14	Municipalities	884,240,000	175,760,000
15	Transport and Communications	1,011,414,400	140,056,000
16	Marine Transport	597,600,000	113,360,000
17	Trade and Marketing	52,368,000	10,048,000
18	Planning and Scientific Research	90,792,000	12,216,000
19	Reserve for Projects	520,532,800	36,019,200
TOTAL		£11,472,000,000	£2,056,000,000

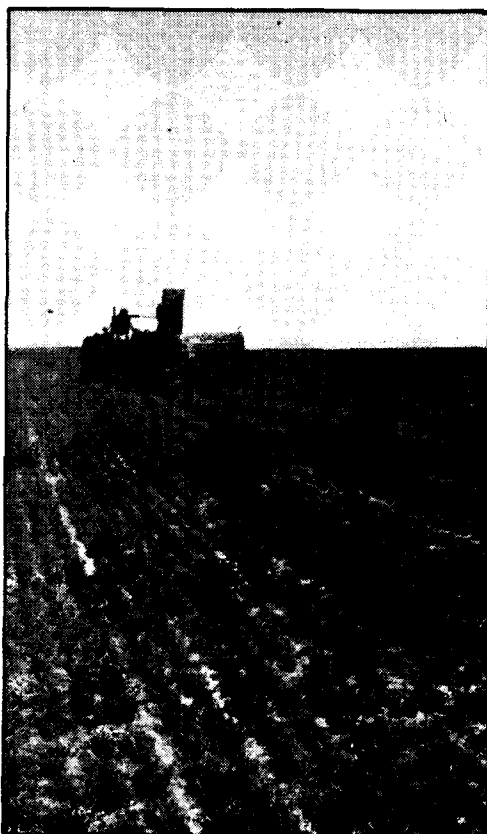


IN JANUARY a massive £11 billion five year development programme was approved by the People's Congress in Tripoli. The new five year plan, which envisages ambitious development projects in production and public services is designed 'to bring Libya out of its colonial past into a new era of dynamism and social stability, and to establish a new Libyan society where none of the citizens will have any anxiety about the basic needs of life.'

The Libya Report

Agriculture

The Desert Comes Alive



Agriculture: now a major industry

ONCE DESCRIBED by travellers as a land of barren desert, the landscape of Libya is now undergoing a major transformation. Though known as the 'granary' of the Roman Empire, this vast territory along the southern Mediterranean and stretching down into the heart of the Sahara has been the victim of harsh climatic conditions and neglect for many centuries.

In less than a decade since the 1969 Revolution, agriculture has now become a major industry in the Libyan economy. The aim is to make the country self-sufficient in food production. Over one and a half million acres of land will have been developed for agriculture by 1983—at an estimated cost of £1,000 million.

The problems being faced by Libya are enormous. Although the country has a land area of about 435 million acres, less than 2.5 per cent of the land is suitable for cultivation under normal circumstances. The climate is extremely arid. Rainfall is, on average, less than 50mm per year for 90 per cent of the country's territory.

Agricultural development is being given priority

by the Libyan government. Allocations exceeding £2,000 million have been approved for the current 1976-1980 Five Year Development Plan announced earlier this year. This follows £798 million budgeted for the previous Three Year Plan.

Land reclamation, irrigation, and intensive research are now being tackled simultaneously by various government agencies. Other responsibilities undertaken by the Ministry of Agricultural Planning include plant production, forestry management, animal production, educational training, agricultural extension and co-operative societies.

Although some major projects are state managed, in general emphasis is given to individual initiative and enterprise. A total of 1,119 farmholdings will be distributed to farmers during the current year, while 3,900 farms should be ready on the Jafara Plain in the near future. Financial incentives have been introduced to encourage farmers to work within a co-operative system. Subsidies for machinery, fertilizers and livestock ranging from 25 to 60 per cent are available for co-operative society members, who also benefit from larger loans from the Agricultural Bank.

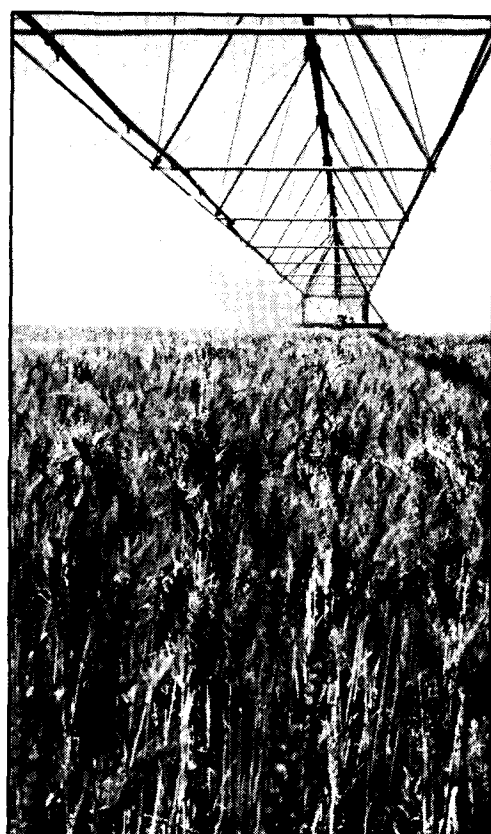
Increasing the area of land under agricultural cultivation means tackling the dual problems of water and wind—the major factors responsible for soil erosion. Dams and windbreaks are established to overcome these problems. Once land has been reclaimed irrigation becomes a priority. Beneath the Libyan desert exist vast subterranean lakes. The development and utilisation of this 'groundwater' is the basis of agricultural expansion, and by its proper application the desert can be made to bloom. A testimony to the potential for Libyan desert agriculture can be found at Kufra—1,000km south of Benghazi—where a flourishing agricultural scheme exists, one of four priority agricultural schemes.

- **The Jafara Plain** scheme embraces six development projects. Plans for the area include reclamation and development of 1.2 million acres of new agricultural land. £350 million will be injected into development of the Jafara Plain during the next five years.

- **Jebel Akhdar**, where 139,680 acres on the Benghazi coastal plain have been earmarked for an animal husbandry project, with pasturelands being developed to support both cattle and sheep. £312 million have been allocated for this region in the current five year plan.

- **Kufra and Serir**—sited in remote desert regions, these schemes are considered unique because commercial desert agriculture on this scale has never before been attempted in a similar physical and social environment. At Kufra more than a hundred wells are in operation providing irrigation for an area of 48,000 acres, of which more than half is under cultivation. At Serir 500 centre-pivot irrigators are to be used for the 120,000 acre project.

- **Fezzan**—one of the remotest areas of Libya, far from the coastal urban areas, development plans include six projects extending the irrigated area by 36,000 acres and providing 1,440 farm units. Development during the next five years will account for £184 million in government aid.



Kufra — a unique project in desert agriculture

The specific aims of the current development programme, published earlier this year, are to increase local production of wheat in order to provide self-sufficiency for local needs by 1978, to increase the production of barley, to raise vegetable production to 345,000 tons and fruit supplies to 150,000 tons this year, and to diversify agricultural products in order to stabilise farmers' incomes.

The expansion of Libya's agricultural sector has clear economic benefits, but a less obvious, though fundamental motive, has encouraged the government to prioritise its agricultural programme. Though to the outside observer it may appear philosophical, it is nonetheless serious and real. The point was emphasised by the Libyan leader, Colonel Muammar Gaddafi, last year: 'In our view food is linked with human freedom. If the Great Powers impose a food embargo against us, we lose our freedom and independence for the sake of wheat and other foodstuffs, insofar as bread is the basis of freedom. Man can survive without a watch, television set or car, but his will fails when he is hungry.'

ADVERTISEMENT

The Libya Report**Education.Housing.Health****A New Society For Libyans****EDUCATION**

'WE HAVE two and a half graduates to guide the new nation and no money,' Libya's first Foreign Minister is said to have commented. Others claim there were nine, but whatever the number it was a bitter indictment of decades of colonial rule. Even seven years after the September Revolution the acute shortage of educated and skilled manpower remains a major problem, despite a multi-million pound training programme. Yet today, a new generation of Libyans is

government projects in 1976 alone will provide an additional 14,206 classrooms.

Thousands of students in teacher training schools will soon face an unenviable task as more than half a million boys and girls in elementary schools progress to the preparatory and secondary stages which today accounts for only 103,565 pupils. Against this background, the expansion of university and higher institute facilities in Libya has been carefully planned.

Tripoli university opened eleven years ago with 100 students in one faculty, but after establishing some faculties at Benghazi, the two centres of learning became autonomous. Benghazi University has become the jewel of Libya's educational system. Both in architecture and educational standards Benghazi is well admired. John Silverlight, writing in *The Observer Magazine*, commented: 'If integrity, academic, personal and architectural, is any indication, Benghazi is indeed aiming at the centuries.'

With five faculties established since 1969, Benghazi enrolled 8,000 students last year, and this is expected to reach 18,350 in 1980, and 35,000 five years later. Tripoli, meanwhile, is expected to enroll up to 15,000 students by 1980, almost treble the present number.



now emerging from the country's schools and universities which will radically alter the character of the country. The implications of the government's massive multi-million pound education programme are crucial to the country's aspirations: education, particularly at university level, is bringing closer the day when Libyan citizens are able to assume full control over the country's economic and commercial activities.

A massive £750 million government allocation will be utilised for educational expansion under the current five year plan announced in January. Apart from expansion of the universities at Tripoli (£200 million) and Benghazi (£167 million),

which aims to ensure that every family has a decent home by 1982. More than 150,000 families were found to be in urgent need of housing by a government study undertaken following the 1969 Revolution. 70,000 families were living in tents, yet the previous government's housing programme did not exceed five units per thousand families.

In January it was announced that £1,270 million will be spent during the next five years on housing projects. By 1978 construction is expected to meet a target of 48,000 new homes. During the previous three year plan, which ended last year, a total of £567 million had been allocated for housing, of which 91 per cent was used, providing 53,920 housing units in various areas of the Republic. Over 110,000 new homes have been built in Libya since the 1969 Revolution; the majority were provided by the private sector financed with soft loans offered by real estate banks.

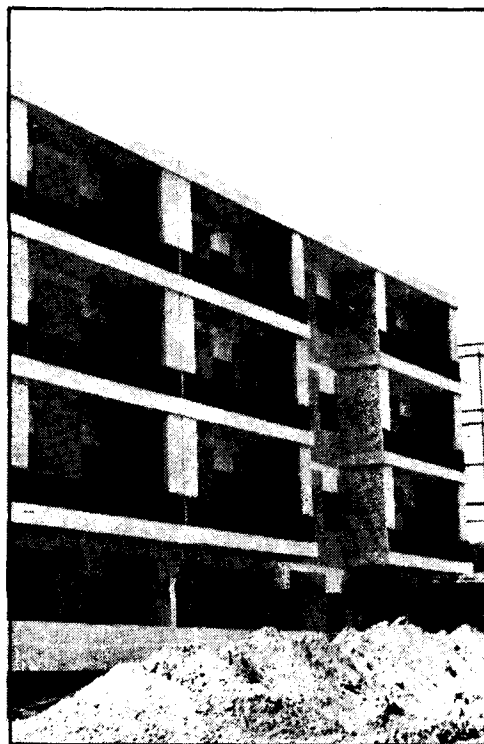
HEALTH

SINCE 1969, the Libyan government has spearheaded a massive campaign to establish and expand a comprehensive welfare state, making medical facilities freely available to all citizens. Health education, which has included utilisation of press, radio and television, has gone hand-in-hand with the establishment of new hospitals and clinics, while existing ones have been enlarged.

During the next five years £274 million will be spent on medical services in Libya. This follows allocations of £308 million for development projects during the past three years. Between 1969 and 1973 ten new hospitals were built bringing the total to 52, and providing an increase in beds of some fifty per cent.

HOUSING

MODERN HIGH-RISE apartment blocks are a new feature of the Libyan skyline. Their recent appearance is testimony to a housing programme



A major achievement has been the eradication of malaria in Libya—before the Revolution the country headed WHO's list of malaria affected countries. Incidence of trachoma has dropped sharply, while cases of tuberculosis have been reduced from 101 to 6 people per ten thousand

The Libya Report

Art and Culture

A New Era for Libyan Art

AN IMMEDIATE sign of the degree of criticism in the Libyan press is often the savage satire of the country's foremost cartoonist. Providing a medium of expression which transcends the language barrier—which can so often create an obstacle between visitors to the Arab world and their hosts, the cartoon can express an opinion which is readily understood by all.

Cartoonists throughout the world have established themselves as powerful social commentators. Their power lies in an ability to express in a simple drawing opinions which for the journalist, author

politics on the international scene.

Zwawe is well respected by Abdulrahman Shulgram, editor of *Al Fajr al Jadid*, Libya's leading daily newspaper. Both are men of independent views, and Shulgram vigorously rejects western voiced criticism of state ownership of the press. He dismisses any suggestion that his paper reflects the views of Gadaffi or the government, stressing that he rarely sees the Libyan leader, and often he does not meet a government Minister from one month to the next.

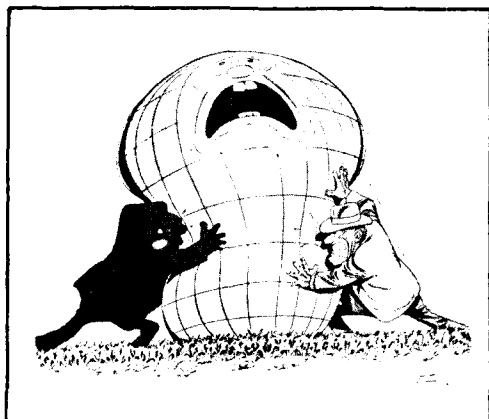
Al Fajr's editor hopes, however, that he can succeed in changing people's values. For him, the dock worker and construction engineer should be society's heroes, not the business tycoon or skilled politician.

Libyan literature was not only suppressed during Italian rule, but its development following World War II was handicapped due to the absence of anything other than preliminary education—and then this was only available to a few of those living in the cities. It is argued, however, that the Italian era, harsh as it was, had the advantage that Libyan literature was able to develop free from any impact of Italian culture.

Modern Libyan literature is characterised by its deep interest in contemporary problems through an outlook that is both humane and enlightened.

Bookshops throughout the country are now well stocked with publications ranging from poetry, short stories and critical and social writings from various viewpoints.

In music and dance, the Libyans are justly proud of the Libyan Folklore Group, which has earned the reputation of being the country's 'cultural ambassador'. Regarded as one of the most highly professional dance groups in Africa and the Arab world, the troupe includes more than fifty musicians and dancers, and has a repertoire of over forty traditional dances.



The world under detente



"You have all my sympathy"

or politician would run to several thousand words.

The work of Mohammed Zwawe, Libya's most talented cartoonist, reflects the country's new generation of writers, artists and poets. Although much concern is expressed in the West today on the subject of freedom of expression in the Third World, few people appreciate the cultural oppression experienced in countries such as Libya under colonial rule.

Mohammed Zwawe is, perhaps, an exception to the post-Revolution trend. His drawings do not reflect Libya's Islamic heritage, but rather a Third World expression. To him art is more than a drawing—it is a form of visual philosophising. He is deeply committed to Third World liberation and a sincere critic of human suffering whether by economic exploitation or political oppression.

Although his works are frequently published in Libyan newspapers or as wall posters for towns and cities, if they express government views this is because they are identical to Zwawe's. He maintains a firm independence from newspaper editors. His targets for attack range from government bureaucracy to excessive profits, and from inadequate government services to Big Power

ARAB DAWN

ARAB DAWN is a monthly magazine reporting on political, social and economic developments in the Libyan Arab Republic, and reviewing events and news related to the Third World.

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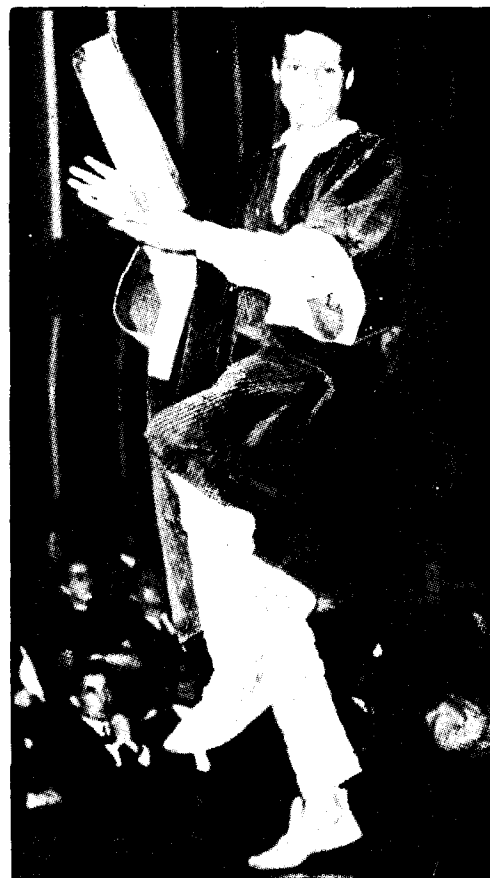
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The group was founded in 1963, but since 1969 the government has assisted them with financial grants. Today the troupe makes frequent appearances in Europe, including Sadlers Wells earlier this year. In 1974 the Libyan dancers won a gold medal at the 16th International Folklore Festival in Brussels.

Their dances reflect the bedouin heritage of Libya, and each is closely related to the moods and seasons of the year or a particular festival occasion. Adorned in colourful costumes, the troupe is at its best in its home environment, surrounded by fellow countrymen chanting, singing and clapping to the hypnotic rhythm of the musicians. Here one can appreciate that music song and dance are not for spectators, but a form of entertainment which demands, at least, some participation.

This report was written by Louis Eaks on behalf of the Information Department of The Embassy of the Libyan Arab Republic, and produced in collaboration with Eurabia (Media Representation) Ltd. Artwork by Peter Brown.

BOOKS & ARTS

V. S. Pritchett

Satellites

The Little Magazines: A Study of Six Editors by IAN HAMILTON *Weidenfeld* £4.95

How to define 'the little magazine'? In name and in time of birth it has the air of being a fierce, chaste sister of the little theatre movement and the sharp one-act plays that made the orthodox theatre look comatose. There was the protest against the heavy Reviews, and other commercial productions at the beginning of the century; it is one in the eye for the professionals by as yet uncorrupted amateurs. The little magazines addressed the austere minority. There have been, Ian Hamilton says, thousands of them; most vanished like proclamations at once and, as he goes on to say in his fond and often wildly funny account of six that managed to hang on for their decade, the same traits are shared by all.

Their self-appointed editors are not entrepreneurs but sectaries convinced of their unique importance; they have scraped money together and scorned the usual channels of the trade which would not touch them; they have had only a happy-go-lucky, Skimpolian idea of debit and credit; they have printed a few excellent things which no one else would touch at the time as well as a lot of high-class rubbish; their backers were often alarmed but gave in to their talent for losing their money in a nebulous cause. Looking back at old numbers, one does pick up the inner history of a literary decade, but the contributors to the magazines interest us far less than the eccentric editors. These sedentary guerrillas are the heroes of a picaresque novel. They are liable to virginal upsets; they lay down the law and assassinate, leaving a trail of comedy behind them. As a poet and editor himself, Mr Hamilton writes with irony but is fair in his histories. The making of the book lies in his enjoyment of the follies and troubles of his predecessors. One lesson emerges: now that private patronage has vanished, public patronage will have to be as reckless at the same gambling tables of faith and fame.

My only criticism of Mr Hamilton's choice of examples is that it is limited to six – no *Adelphi*, which had its profitable messes; no *New Writing*, perhaps because he thinks it a cemetery of war-time reportage. His chief interest, except for the polemics of *Partisan Review*, is in poetry, where the snipings are more spirited.

Mr Hamilton opens with the 'divine afflatus' felt by Margaret Anderson when she started the *Little Review*. Saved from flatulence by Ezra Pound, she got herself prosecuted for publishing a section of *Ulysses*, fought off the American distrust of European poets, but found herself at

war with her masterful co-editor, Jane Heap. This lady had a taste for Dada and admired the Baroness Else von Freytag Loringhoven, who pointed out that no one had done much about the Art of Madness. She wrote the immortal lines:

Thee I call Hamlet of wedding ring – chasing
ghost of honeymoon bliss – to detest
who possessed
– killed – once livebody
Of circumstance primarily – individually –
insignificant –
since not blood be filled into
extinct, withered-away tissue

The Baroness always managed, remarks Mr Hamilton, 'to keep her life one step ahead':

She appeared at smart cultural receptions
with a face painted yellow, lips black; with
a cancelled postage stamp on her cheek, and
a coal scuttle strapped like a helmet on her
head. When she fell in love with William
Carlos Williams and was rejected by him,
she shaved her head and lacquered it ver-
million: 'Shaving one's head is like having
a new love experience.'

Bliss was it in that dawn, in the Twenties, to be alive. Still Pound, always begging and bullying, brought Yeats, Eliot, and Wyndham Lewis to the *Little Review*. Who else wanted them?

After this comes Harriet Monroe's long-lived *Poetry*, with Pound, Yeats and Eliot again, trouble with *vers libre* and the Imagists, and then Wallace Stevens, Carlos Williams and Marianne Moore. The magazine was founded in solid indignation at American indifference to poetry. It was mocked because it started in Chicago and was nicknamed Poetry in Porkopolis. It had no policy, no enemies and no scandals beyond that of an occasional obsession with a chronically over-productive bad poet. Still, Miss Monroe's patriotic head was turned by the Panama canal:

Prometheus the Fire-Bringer, Ulysses the
wanderer, Siegfried the dragon-slayer are not
more typical of humanity than this modern
piercing of the isthmus.

A not uncommon utterance: others had said that the real American poetry was engineering. Miss Monroe was a dogged extrovert who died in an attempt to cross the Andes with a member of the P.E.N. Club. Mr Hamilton concedes, however, that she created a 'durable' trade journal in the best sense of the word.

On to Eliot's *Criterion*, his worried attacks on communism, his silence about Hitler, and his disappearance into the dense and dismal labyrinths of theology: 'Like many original writers Eliot had a deep weakness for pastiche of his own work.' Good things were published but there were no discoveries, no novelists or story writers

admitted, at least not until the end. It was a journal in which the editor wrote strenuously at large. The best editors have a streak of madness: they need the extravagance of the platform, not the doubts of the pulpit. John Gould Fletcher said Eliot suffered from 'the Hellenic paranoia'. No comedy in the *Criterion*: he wrote, of course, for himself.

The comedy of antagonists who unconsciously swap their principles is found in the story of *Partisan Review*. In America the conflicts of the Thirties became one of those conscience-stripping Watergates that go on for ever, invigorated by the distance between the purlieu of Greenwich Village and the scene where confrontations were bloody and real. What I miss here are the personalities that were hidden in iron-clads like Dwight Macdonald and Philip Rahv: the latter was not so much drifting from a revolutionary position as directing himself to what he really knew and valued – literature. It must be said that English writers, with the exception of Orwell, got through the Thirties by a sort of sleight of hand. They said serious things lightly. In the America of *Partisan*, where it was one's duty to identify oneself with the mills of the Puritan God grinding slowly, one got to know the subject grain by grain and, as Mr Hamilton says, *Partisan* was never as foolish as its principles made it look.

The two very odd English editors who complete the book are the Grigson of *New Verse* at the rise of the wave when the Thirties began, and Cyril Connolly, who saw the wave flop to an end in the war which left everyone exhausted. Grigson, who in those days had the innocent look of an owl schoolboy, slashed with his billhook and was savage with his Hampstead weed-killer; Connolly hid in his wit and his gourmet tastes; in the inevitable aftermath, he nursed the slothful Irish death-wish and the romantic despairs of sunset. Both had high gifts of satirical fantasy and impromptu mockery. Both had useful obsessions of the dissenting kind and were energetic disciples – Grigson perpetuating Wyndham Lewis, Connolly tied to Flaubert's struggles with the sentence and wiping out the whole of English literature in the 19th century, especially the novel, as unreadable. Later, as he matured, Grigson became an excellent critic in his special fields.

After seeing 'the planet Auden' rise, *New Verse* soon made war on nearly everyone, including its own contributors. If Grigson had one eye open for the new poem (Mr Hamilton says), he had more than two open for the fraud. He had the true minority mind. It seems to have been enough for a writer to be published in the many publications, precariously alive in those hopeful days, to be down-graded; but he did make sound critical points and was really attacking the whole literary world and its cautious, tepid reviewing. The difficulty was that his fantasy shot up to extravagances so brilliant that they left the victim in the end untouched:

He is a sluggish bore, a Hopkins-Binyon
bore, a tangle of pimpled laurels bore [i.e.
he was published, say, by the *Listener*, the
Adelphi, *Everyman* and, once only, by *New
Verse* itself], a costive bore, a really I do
not know Sir James Frazer bore . . . He

is also a yearning, a blind deaf word-gargling, 1930 book-bedded, prose-snipping, egg-bound bore, a bore not yet beyond B.O. breast-fingering poems, a bore pretending to purpose, a culture bore . . .

Wallace Stevens was a 'stuffed goldfinch': Hugh MacDiarmid's *Second Hymn to Lenin* was '77 pages of unvarying twittering'; *Scrutiny* would become 'the perfect body builder for prigs' unless it changed its policy. The disciple of Wyndham Lewis had to have an arch-Enemy and, this was the Sitwell family, Edith Sitwell leading as 'the scarecrow of an advanced fool farm'. All editors, however, are prone to accident: Grigson took up *Mass Observation*, but when he saw its literary products he quickly scrambled back. Still, a wasp in the house livens people up and Grigson had a strict eye for the detail and essence of performance.

Horizon washed to and fro, up and down, like a jellyfish during the war, unashamed of its moods and contradictions. Writers were on quarter time: escapism was an

air-raid shelter and natural to the stale drudgery of a state of siege. The irredeemable nature of Connolly, and especially his despairs, had something of the secret life of everyone in those fragmenting times; and in many of his perversities – the civilian's grunts against the idle soldiers in the early phases of the war, for example – one sniffs the bad air of the time. His conversation, his mimics of the 'infâme' of the totalitarian kind had a kind of genius. If to have no real policy is a serious defect in a little magazine, he had the gift of living petulantly or moodily from minute to minute, and *Horizon* annoyed or bewildered to the point that one got fond of it, as Mr Hamilton can't help being.

The natural life of a little magazine, says the author, is about ten years; and Connolly tired of *Horizon*, as Eliot tired of the *Criterion*, embarrassed by what at first had seemed one of the attractions of godhead: reflecting at large. Professional editors know better than to do that; anyway, they haven't the time.

he loved, Lady Branden and Mrs Norton, among the Panshanger MSS at Hertford County Record Office. Melbourne's autobiography will henceforth be a major source for the first 30 or so years of his life, that is, from 1779 when he was born, to 1813 when he sat down to write.

Nevertheless the real secret of his birth, if secret it is, still eludes us. Was he or was he not the illegitimate son of the attractive Lord Egremont, rather than the legal second son of the boring and unfaithful Lord Melbourne? William has not told. But the fact that Philip Ziegler repeats Abraham Hayward's 19th-century gossip in his scholarly and not unsceptical pages, suggests that the story is true in substance. 'Aye, you have heard that story, have you?' said William when Landseer showed astonishment at the likeness between a portrait of Egremont and his host. 'It's all a damned lie, for all that!' expostulated William, adding, however, *sotto voce*: 'But who the devil can tell who's anybody's father?' More important, William's mother was the beautiful and clever Elizabeth Milbanke, Byron's Aspasia and aunt by marriage – a woman whom anyone would be grateful to have as mother or aunt.

Despite William Lamb's interesting beginnings it was many years before he got off the mark. The lack of commitment that was to be his bane declared itself early. Apart from a passion for Shakespeare at the age of eight, there were few signs of distinction until his elder brother Peniston died in January 1805. On that date William became heir to a peerage and a fortune. Two months later he got engaged to Lady Caroline Ponsonby, and again a few months later he became a Whig MP.

The marriage between William Lamb and Caroline, says Ziegler with honest realism, is chiefly remembered for the romantic affair between his wife and Lord Byron. Unfortunately William's autobiography seems to have provided no new facts on the subject. His biographer, however, has several sharp comments of his own to make. In the Byron-Caroline Lamb affair he finds a libretto 'clearly written by accomplished artists', but the plot of a 'third-rate operetta'. The most interesting feature of the affair he sees as 'the dog that did not bark in the night' – in other words, William's failure 'to take any steps to protect his household or his honour'.

William's second failure lay in giving Caroline no moral guidance, nothing but tolerance. Even in regard to her worst excesses 'he did not care enough to make a determined stand'. Wary of domestic uproar, he chose to be 'a by-stander', a position that 'can have done nothing to check her decay'. Melbourne's own *obiter dicta* on marriage have been aptly selected. Advice to Queen Victoria: 'The measure of married happiness is to have a great number of children.' (William had one son only, an epileptic.) Advice to his nephew: 'Remember that happiness is neither in marriage nor in celibacy . . . but in a calm, settled and satisfied mind . . .'

If a calm mind could never be provided by Melbourne's marriage, what of his political career? After finishing this book I felt a great sadness for its dazzling hero *manqué*. Melbourne's passion for toleration

Elizabeth Longford

A Man for Three Seasons

Melbourne by PHILIP ZIEGLER Collins £6.50

This is undoubtedly Philip Ziegler's finest and most creative achievement to date. Hitherto he has trained his beam upon subjects which are superficially dim, succeeding through his scholarship and art in giving them a strong and unsuspected appeal – the Duchess of Dino, Addington, William IV. Now, with Melbourne, the position is reversed.

Ever since the publication of David Cecil's two-part masterpiece, *The Young Melbourne and Lord M*, William Lamb has been one of the glamour-boys of British history (Lord David's book was, unsurprisingly, the favourite reading of J. F. Kennedy). But before one has even opened this new biography it is clear that Queen Victoria's adored Lord M is going to emerge as a very different character. The romantic portrait by Lawrence has not been selected for the jacket. Instead we find Landseer's splendid but mundane vision of a prime minister: portly frame draped in a crimson dressing-gown, double chin settled into the stock, swept-forward curls (so much admired by the young Victoria) thinning and tinged with grey. Ziegler's dedication to his wife, 'who took Caroline's side', is another signal of what is to come. In the brisk foreword all is made plain.

After a glowing tribute to Lord David's biography, Ziegler confesses to radical disagreement:

my understanding of Melbourne differs sharply from that of Lord David . . . I agree that Melbourne as a friend or relation must have been one of the most delightful, wise and entertaining of men, but in public life I believe him also to have been ambitious, unscrupulous and almost wholly without principle. He was, in short, much less

of a carefree amateur, much more of a politician.

Ziegler defines the difference between his and Lord David's analysis as one of generations. There may be something in this distinction between biographies written by the as yet unravaged young of the Thirties and those by the disillusioned generation of post-1945; though personally I should have thought the last golden age of 'care-free' biographers would have been pre-1914. The difference, as I see it, is more between two individual historians than between two generations. Lord David's justly famous pen-portrait, for instance, of 18th-century Whig society in all its glory could find no place in these pages: it emanated from Lord David's own background and instinctive reaction to the opulence of those days. Whether the society was Whig or Tory, bred by Devonshires at Chatsworth or by Cecils at Hatfield, mattered little. Ziegler, on the other hand, had cut his teeth on the harsher aspects of both Tory and old-fashioned Whig opposition to popular reform, as seen through the careers of Addington and William IV. He was, therefore, well prepared for the cool, compassionless note that sounds throughout the first half of the 19th-century – and so seldom in Lord David's entrancing pages.

Part of this new biography's great value lies in its source material. True, the Lamb papers, frustratingly and to my mind unnecessarily incarcerated in the BM until 1980, were not available. This unavoidable omission apart, the book is remarkable for the gaps which have been plugged. In his own modest words, the author was extraordinarily fortunate 'to stumble on' the substantial fragment of Melbourne's autobiography, as well as the letters of two women

verged on indifference, and so he missed much of the fun of politics. Ziegler defines Melbourne's political philosophy thus:

'Look before you leap and then don't do it' . . . a passivism tempered only by the reflection that it might be better to leap if otherwise you would certainly be pushed.

That puts it perfectly. It shows just why Melbourne as Prime Minister got no real kick out of the great reforms of the 1830s. The exhilaration of the leap was never his. At the same time the third alternative to leaping or standing still – resignation – was not his way either. He clung to office when on every argument he should have guided the inexperienced young Victoria to make her terms with Peel. If Melbourne was not himself a Bedchamber conspirator, his passivity made the Plot possible.

On other counts, Lord M's tutelage of the young Queen was his happiest contribution to politics. But even here there is room for a doubt. Might not someone else less cynical than Lord M – Peel, for instance – have done the job better still? I can never forgive Lord M for the jaunty manner in which he answered the question of the century. 'What happens to the poor Irish peasants when they are evicted?' asked Victoria. With a laugh Lord M replied: 'They are *absorbed*, somehow or other.' Peel, like Prince Albert, took his duties to the Queen seriously. Ziegler, however, believes that Peel's charmlessness would have prevented him from becoming the tutor Victoria required, even if he had been Prime Minister at her accession. I wonder. Albert, we know, prepared the Queen for Peel. Might not Peel have prepared her more wholeheartedly for Albert? They were her true male type. Lord M was a delicious aberration.

Perhaps the most striking passages in this biography concern Melbourne's women. The affair with Lady Branden in Ireland went far deeper than anyone has hitherto dreamt; and the affair with Mrs Norton reveals hidden and curious strains in Melbourne's temperament. The Panshanger boxes containing Lady Branden's letters disclose Melbourne's obsession with flagellation (out of 40 letters only four do not mention it), while one of Mrs Norton's letters refers to his 'favourite subject of a woman whipping a child'. We knew already that he recommended to Queen Victoria the whipping of human beings, though not of dogs. Edith Sitwell's poetic soul sensed this sadistic streak, although, under the influence of Engels, she exaggerated.

From all this Ziegler deduces a possible turbulence beneath the super-urbane exterior. He supports his theory with the strange fact that all the four women whom Melbourne loved were passionate in their reactions, insatiably demanding and extravagantly jealous – Caroline Lamb, Lady Bran-

den, Mrs Norton, and even Queen Victoria. It may be, speculates Ziegler, that these violent characteristics 'were in some way an essential part of his relationship with any woman whom he truly loved . . . a stimulus without which the affair lacked flavour'.

The theory is so persuasive that I am tempted to extend it to Melbourne's politics. (Certainly Ziegler does not do so, accepting as true 'in political terms' Melbourne's remark to Mrs Norton that he disliked rows.) As a baby of one year old, William boasted of remembering his removal from London to the country, to escape the Gordon riots – a genuine tribute to his fixation on violence if not to his memory. The violence that he personally dealt with as Home Secretary was 'Captain Swing's' agricultural rising of 1830. Melbourne proved rather less merciful than the law itself allowed. Can one resist the suspicion that he reacted to this unique revolutionary stimulus with a shock indistinguishable from a thrill of pleasure? At any rate, the real Melbourne was a subject for the psychiatrist rather than a model for philosopher-kings.

Whatever 'lukewarm' may mean in these peculiar circumstances, Ziegler sums up Melbourne thus – a Laodicean incapable of a grand passion rather than a Lucifer whose grand sin would be easier to forgive. 'A good man, a decent man, but something less than a full man.' Yet such is the perennial fascination of this incomplete man that he has attracted once again a biographer of outstanding gifts, and a brilliantly 'full' biography.

Frederic Raphael

Speak Now

Details of a Sunset by VLADIMIR NABOKOV
Weidenfeld £4.50

It is always poignant to watch other people packing. With what reminded tenderness they exhume and reappraise old articles they have not inspected for years! In particular, with what a rigorous sigh do they sort out the vestiges of their youth! The poignancy is the more affecting when the departing spirit is a writer and when the bag he is packing is labelled, in his own writing, for eternity. The process of judicious selection may strike the unsympathetic or the heterodox as narcissistic or self-absorbed, but others will honour the condemned man who breakfasts thoughtfully among his souvenirs and does not blench at the prospect of declaring himself to St Peter the critic, or even to Monsieur Pierre, his idiotic headsmen.

Details of a Sunset, to cudgel a few more steps from my faltering metaphor, resembles those last reprieved items for which the incipient traveller finds that he does, after all, have room. He stows them with buttressing intent in the interstices of more solid necessities. In other words, if these short stories are not themselves major

The Second Time Around

Malcolm Levene £3.75

'Aimed at the redundant as a guide to rethinking . . . readable, intelligent, sensitive and brief. Highly recommended.' *Sunday Times*

Full-Hearted Consent

The Story of the Referendum Campaign – and the Campaign for the Referendum

Philip Goodhart, MP £5.00

'Thoughtful and amusing . . . a blow by blow account.' *Daily Telegraph*
'The smell of real politics . . . Mr Goodhart prints some diverting new facts.' *Sunday Times*

This Nutrition Business

Professor John Yudkin £4.50

'Sets out to resolve the bafflement of the layman.' *Sunday Telegraph*
'Throws welcome light on the subject of sustenance.' *Glasgow Herald*

Among this week's contributors:

LADY LONGFORD's biography of Byron will be published in October.

V. S. PRITCHETT has just completed a study of Turgenev to appear next year.

FREDERIC RAPHAEL's most recent novel is *California Time* (1975).



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works, they sit and fit nicely among the more solid of Nabokov's achievements: his whole *oeuvre* will travel the more unshakably for their inclusion. I do not mean to pack him off to his literary Valhalla too soon: he is in the second lustrum of his seventies but he continues to enjoy a *vieillesse verte* and one may well hope that he will yet give us another masterpiece. However, in this baker's dozen of stories translated from his young manhood, he has the unmistakable air of *celui qui boucle sa valise*. The collection consists of work published first in émigré journals during the Twenties and Thirties, all rendered or re-rendered from the Russian by Nabokov *père et fils*, rather as father and grandfather might together groom a precocious youngster, the very image of them both.

Nabokov has the forceful skill to hold a bead of the past dancing on the tip of his pen for longer than nature ever allows. In the redemption of lost time he is the rival of Proust. But then he is everybody's rival. As showy as some literary Gatsby, though with a less dubious provenance, he has made it his business to move into the great mansions of English literature, to refurbish tarnished figures of speech and retouch crumbling ornamentation just as the natives have decided, with desiccated prudence, that they can no longer live in such style. He employs our language with a relish and a sense of the particular which no contemporary home-grown scribe cares or dares to attempt. If he tumbles into absurdity from time to time, from time to time (and more frequently, much more frequently) he soars into magnificence.

In these stories there is less donnish show-off than in the more convoluted anagrams, acrostics or chess puzzles (the reader to play, and be mated) so often installed in the grander fictions. Concise chastity of expression is perfectly in tune with the inimitable (try, try!) fragility of recollective sentiment. Only the word chitinous (kittenishly thrown in) drove me to the dictionary, where I was gratified to learn that chitinous is the preferred form. It means, from *χίτων* of *course*, 'relating to the organic substance which forms the elytra and the integuments of insects and the carapaces of crustacea'. Its entomological connotations may excuse Nabokov for reaching the dusty adjective from its arcane shelf. The diligent pursuit of fugitive colours is second nature to the man: he throws his net of words with a dexterity which captures but never blurs each specific tint and taint.

Now look here, some of these stories, surely, are winsome stuff and are decked out with plots of no great substance? Moreover, are they not often concerned with self-pitying folk and do they not harp on childhood with rather morbid retrospection? Several of them do indeed employ similar *données*: the dear departed retrace their steps only to find that their places are no longer warm. Yet who has contrived better than Nabokov to convey, amid all the *recherché recherche du ton perdu*, the transient sweetness of familiar happiness? He has had the nerve triumphantly to challenge Tolstoy's cheap assertion that all happy families are alike. 'Christmas', an elegy for a dead son, is singularly stained

with the flavour of paternal affection; the precise trappings of a pre-revolutionary Russian country house somehow (oh somehow!) serve to furnish more tellingly the agony of the mourning father by celebrating another lost world, another lost happiness.

Nabokov's exile has turned him into a one-man nation, a literary state, with its own volatile currency, its own ribald and piebald diplomacy, its own arachnid history, spun cunningly from its aching entrails. At times, as he measures himself against the present (especially the USSR) there is a silly vanity in his postures, but his hostility to crass positivism, the vulgar generality, has driven (or encouraged) him to use his art for the preservation of whatever is precious and vulnerable. Even what will prove to be part of another's memory deserves, on his reckoning, to be treated with artful respect. His use of language is, finally, as moral as it is sometimes mannered, as uplifting as it is sometimes pettishly provocative. I do not know how much more he will write but, without appearing to say goodbye, it is perhaps timely to lay aside the weapons of the hebdomadal quibbler and to offer a certain humble homage to a literally wonderful writer.

Paul Johnson

Top People

Churchill and Morton: Correspondence between Major Sir Desmond Morton and R. W. Thompson edited by R. W. Thompson Hodder & Stoughton £5.25

This is an unusual book, indeed, properly speaking, not a book at all. It consists mainly of letters exchanged between Major Sir Desmond Morton and R. W. Thompson while the latter was writing his study of Churchill, *The Yankee Marlborough*. The point about Morton was that he had known Churchill since the first world war when, as a young staff officer, whose status behind the front line was justified by a bullet lodged in his heart, he had chaperoned the Minister of Munitions on visits to France. In the Twenties he was recruited by British espionage to run their industrial division, and after Hitler's rise to power he was permitted by successive prime ministers to give Churchill private briefings on the state of preparedness. Morton remained close to Churchill during the war – some maintained he knew him more intimately than any other members of his staff – but left him in 1945 when Churchill, after his electoral defeat, refused to quit active politics. The function of Thompson's letters was to draw out of Morton anecdotes of the Churchill years, and *aperçus* of the old man's character. As such it is moderately successful, and often has the merits of good conversation. It is all we are likely to get from Morton, a man of obsessive secrecy, who destroyed all his papers, kept no diaries (so he said) and who extracted a solemn promise from

Thompson that no information contained in his letters was to be published until after both he and Churchill were dead.

This is an insider's book, dotted with references to Watty, Chink, Boney, Reggie, Pug, Jock, Brookie, the Auk and so forth. It is also curiously old-fashioned. The letter writers discuss at length why Churchill could not be called a gentleman, but equally why he could not simply be dismissed as a cad. Morton, in particular is transfixed by the 'gentleman' issue: he felt that to say Alexander would have been a better general if he had been less of a gentleman was 'the greatest possible compliment' a man like 'Alex' could be paid. Morton claimed that he himself could not properly be described as a member of the Establishment since he was a Roman Catholic convert – itself a concept now weirdly out of date. One is constantly surprised by the prevalence of pre-war, indeed pre-World War I, ideas in these exchanges. This particularly applies to the discussion of Lord Randolph Churchill's syphilis:

A frightfully dangerous and unpleasant subject . . . the muck that shocks me so deeply. It purports to be an account of Lord R's contracting syphilis . . . even if I loathed Winston, which I do not, I would do my utmost to protect his name from this kind of dirt . . .

But it would be a mistake to dismiss Morton as an old fogey. On the contrary, he was a very shrewd and experienced man of the world, an excellent judge of character; and, moreover, gifted with a judicious mind which insisted on an exceptionally high standard of proof and always drew in considering various estimates of Churchill's nature and behaviour, a rigid distinction between opinion and inference and direct observation. This comes out time and time again in his letters. Some of Churchill's surviving friends and admirers have criticised Morton for an unjustly critical view of the old man. It is true that Morton was fully aware of (and quite frank about, in these letters) Churchill's failings. But he is always careful to balance his remarks by drawing attention to complementary strengths and qualities. The portrait which emerges is, to my mind, highly realistic. Churchill, says Morton, was not usually a selfish man, because that implied he deliberately advanced his own interests at the expense of other people. But he was egotistical: he tended to identify his own personal and political object with any cause he had taken up, and thus unconsciously used and exploited people from (what were to him) high motives.

Morton is emphatic that Churchill never really had a friend. The people he took up and mixed with were there to be used once their usefulness was over, they were not so much discarded as allowed to retreat from his awareness. Thus:

The Churchill-Lindemann relationship was never a real friendship. Each recognised the use each could make of and be to the other. There was no more real friendship between them than there is between Winston and Onassis today [1961].

Again:

The Beaver only liked Winston as a sparring partner and vice versa. Winston was never as close to F.E. as to the Beaver, because F.E. slightly despised him. He could ou

argue Winston on any subject at any time.

And Churchill, says Morton, tended to be hostile to those he could not contrive to fill with fear: hence his coldness to Auchinleck, Slim and Wavell, especially the last:

I think that the first time I ever deeply disliked Winston and realised the depths of selfish brutality to which he could sink, was when he told me, not only that he was getting rid of Wavell from the Middle East, but why.

To which Thompson adds:

Desmond described to me how Churchill had walked up and down his room, chin sunk on chest, glowering ferociously, and muttering: 'I wanted to show my power!' over and over.

There is a good deal of similar high-level gossip in this volume, none of outstanding historical importance, but interesting enough to gain a place on any shelf of Churchilliana.

Valentine Cunningham

In the Wry

Kinflicks by LISA ALTHER Chatto £4.95

The Dying of the Light by BRIAN GLANVILLE
Secker & Warburg £3.50

Mabel: A Story by ROBERT CREELEY Marion
Boys £5.95

There is a lot to be said for the consolations of the familiar in fiction. After all, they're what sustain the resilient, reliable genres like thrillers and detective stories and hospital romances. They're what make readers require further appearances from already well-known Falstaffs and Crouchbacks and Stephen Dedaluses (let alone from Poirots and Applebys). So the solipsistic wish to see your own face in the mirror that art is holding up to nature isn't too easily mocked. Especially when, as in the American case, recent traumas have so shaken the collective sense of selfhood as to drive people to keep checking in mirrors that the physiognomy of Uncle Sam (his Vietnam flakjacket and helmet just doffed) is still intact.

Predictably, though, American fiction is right now obsessively showing and reshowing the old reels from the last decade, telling it again and again, Sam, how whole rafts of spruced-up youths, assiduously dosed with clean and godly notions, went a-whoring after the strange gods of peace and acid and earth-trips and dike-lib and such. Look, Mom (*Kinflicks* and its ilk shout, with reassuring intent), that freak is me, zapping the cops or dropping out of college or peddling soya happiness or just spaced out of sight. And clearly Mom just loves being reminded – as the rapturous US reception of Lisa Alther's quite ordinary, not to say extremely familiar, documentary shows.

You'll even find J. D. Salinger being invoked in comparison with Ms Alther: and not unjustly, at least to the extent that her account is often to be caught uproariously in the wry. The novel skilfully laces together two lives: the dying Mrs Babcock

and her daughter Ginny, returned to Tennessee, to tend her and mull over the mess that growing up has left her in. Her rake's progress has been one burlesque shin down a rope richly noded with comic knots – not least, of course, sexual knottings. Straight American life – with its revivalists, footballers and bloodsports – is, of course, as bent as can be, but the biggest guns are reserved for Ginny's own emancipated daftnesses, particularly her zonked-out-protest-leftist-macrobiotic period (funded, naturally, by daddy's armament factory). But credible and comic though she is at first, Ginny gradually palls when you realise she's being presented (and at such great length) not for what she is but for what she's to stand for: she's serving less as a person in her generation than a characteristic image of her generation. And this weakness eventually goes soft as she and her mother find oneness, and she repeats her own plight with the older generation in the nursing to maturity of a baby swift. There's a lot to be said for consolation: but less when it goes as gooiily limp as that.

There's little to console in Brian Glanville's *The Dying of the Light*, familiar though much of it is – including the title quotation. England's once-greatest goalkeeper Sid Rawlings has not landed on his feet in the post-goalmouth world. A failure as a manager, he's now got nothing much to do except attend the occasional nostalgia night and celebrity binge arranged by old fan Manny Goldstone. Grievance, motored by the glimpsed opulence of the new footballers, drives him to crimes that get increasingly less petty. In the past, Manny and legal men with football interests have always got Sid off lightly, but this time they'll be hard pressed.

So daughter Jenny, who has made it out of her philistine father's grim world of short-back-and-sided Lens and Dons to university and Head of English at a comprehensive, suggests a protest suicide in the middle of yet another commemorative occasion. A helpful girl, she even gets her old dad the gun to do himself in with. Finally he has the good sense not to pull any triggers: he should have thumped her and her hintings up the throat at the start. But then neither he nor the novel is in-

clined to note how unpleasant is Jenny's continual harshness towards the less intelligent or educated: in her version, the prosecuting solicitor has a 'suburban whine', her sister-in-law is a 'tight little petty-bourgeois' with a secretary's mind, and a store detective is lumped with others of his 'dim kind'. Like her father, she is constantly aggrieved. And the novel fails to strike a sympathetic note at any point – whereas it ought to be possible for the thinking man's football fiction to enter the world of rich super-stars without having to cheer itself up with reflections that they're only a bunch of oafs who will, happily, also come to the grief that overtook the old and underpaid sweats and hackers.

The three fictions in process (Robert Creeley's own description of them) contained in *Mabel: A Story* make an odd lot. They're the result of collaborations with other artists – including R. B. Kitaj – and that guarantees them interest if not importance, but they are also meant, more off-puttingly, to reinforce some numerological mysticisms about the properties of threeness that the author unilluminatingly spells out in his introduction. On the evidence here offered, writing that makes significant the 'fact of process' is to be wilfully self-absorbed: a narcissistic paddling in the coke-tin-and-condom-strewn waters of Creeley self-consciousness.

Chumminess isn't, however, confined to reflections on the typewriter, the paper, and the typing errors that on second thoughts are granted significance: it embraces what Olson and Gregory C. have said, what John Cage thought about motels, and the postcard from Ginsberg. 'Mescaline,' the reader is assured at one point, 'cleared out a lot of gunk', but the writing scarcely rams home the claim. Still, amid all the indulged privateness there are some occasions of meaning and coherence that the reader can share, particularly the strikingly erotic fantasies and the fragmentary memories of childhood, past homes and past loves. Moments when the narrator's desire 'for one story, seemingly to be for ever like they say, circular and containing and centred' is not only apparently achieved but is, *qua* authorial motive, made believable. Most often, though, the narrative is content with jottings, a stubbornly unprocessed process.

Roy Fuller

Autumnal Metamorphoses

A rather untidy bird soars up – a leaf!
Southward, a slanting light from pie-crust cloud.
Trees ginger as a cat. Long shadows cast
At noon. Your breath condenses or will soon
Condense on your moustache. The creeper's changed
Into a red disease of walls. To catch
The post that goes at seven you skim through near
Dark, sanguine flies, invisible filaments.

In houses chequered with yellow windows children
Already hear that gormless sons of kings
Do better than their cunning brothers and
Little toads turn to lovely girls if put
In hollowed carrots. Soon, whole families
Will dream – and cry unheard – of their desires.

Theatre

Craig Raine

All Change

Clouds *Hampstead*
Troilus and Cressida *Stratford*
Bread *Young Vic*

Shifty, unreliable things, clouds are:

That which is now a horse, even with
a thought
The rack dislimns, and makes it indistinct,
As water is in water.

muses Antony, reflecting on his own instability. *Antony and Cleopatra* is Shakespeare's most protean play, full of scene-shifts and changes of character. No one keeps a consistent shape. Antony is the great warrior who deserts his fleet at Actium, the unfaithful husband who regrets his wife too late, the romantic who takes Octavia in politic marriage. The loyal Enobarbus changes sides; the Roman people are fickle as the 'vagabond flag upon the stream', changing with the tide. The play is a veritable *bureau de change*, where we hear the rattle of large denominations and the jingle of small coin. A shrewd accountant, Shakespeare knows that both are valid currency, that the shining krugerrand is easily translated into a heap of dirty pennies, and vice versa. In the cloudy columns of his ledger, it's all change.

In Michael Frayn's new comedy, the eponymous clouds forecast a similar sifting of unreliable and contradictory data. Nothing is quite what it seems – not even the scenery which, in a neat visual pun, is limited to a few white chairs that group or drift apart (like clouds) to form a Cadillac or be themselves, as the action requires. When the play opens, they are drawn up in forbidding rows like an income tax demand. In this sparsely furnished and utterly clueless limbo, a man and woman exchange animated pleasantries in broken English. And here beginneth the first lesson: contrary to all appearances, they are not students waiting for a language class in a Berlitz school off Notting Hill Gate. They are, in fact, English journalists (Owen and Mara) at the Ministry of External Relations in Cuba, where they have been sent by rival colour mags. Mistaking each other for the briefing officer, they launch into bold pidgin, since neither speaks a word of Spanish. This improbable confusion is funny enough, but the reprise palls when an American journalist enters speaking fluent and misleading Spanish. Sometimes, if the unpredictable is not to become itself predictable, appearances ought to tell the truth.

In *Clouds* they never do. The comic logic demands that all our perceptions are inverted. Thus, the American's uncritical admiration of Cuba goes sour, while Owen's determination to put awkward questions goes soft. He forgets the labour

camp and is enraptured by the sugar mills and irrigation schemes he started by mocking. Everything is changed, changed utterly, and a terrible beauty is born – Mara. She begins spinsterish, plain as the Sahara desert, fighting a coup d'état in her bowels, unable to write a word, movingly homesick for the bedsitter where she scribbles her novels. She ends as a sexy bitch who gets lucky with all the men – including a negro chauffeur with the build of Sonny Liston. Previously taunted as unprofessional by Owen (whose respect for facts is based on reporting provincial funerals), her biro now twitches like a teleprinter as she takes down the latest results of her attractiveness – Owen's stop-press groans. In the final tableau, she sits in the front of the Cadillac, toying with a tribute from the chauffeur (an ophthalmoscope to symbolise corrected vision), and says: 'Look at that sky. Not a cloud in sight. Pure emptiness.' Following a brawl over Mara's elusive favours, the men take a back seat and nurse their injured bodies and their injured pride. And that, Michael Frayn implies, is the truth at last.

It is as simple and as glibly satisfying as Dr Johnson's answer to Berkeley's theory that every thing in the universe is ideal:

I shall never forget the alacrity with which Johnson answered, striking his foot with mighty force against a large stone, till he rebounded from it, 'I refute it *thus*'.

Now, Johnson's neat philistinism is good theatre. So is the end of *Clouds*. We register a shock comparable to the impact of Johnson's shoe leather – yet we remain unmoved, like Johnson's stone. The finale is slick as a razor blade, but it cuts through knots rather than unties them, and I preferred the earlier tangles. For instance, Mara delivers a theatrically clumsy soliloquy to a stooge, recreating the pathetic essentials of her habitat, from the pennies that prop a rickety table leg to the purr of a window-pane as the trains go by. True, the novelist is writing here (it's a note struck infallibly in his *Sweet Dreams*) and it is undramatic. It is, however, more deeply engaged and touching than the theatrical pastiche of the close. Those pennies are krugerrands, in fact.

In the new John Barton - Barry Kyle production of *Troilus and Cressida*, the characters divide rather more easily into queers and straights than they do into Greeks and Trojans. Shakespeare's broad burlesque of Homer is turned into high camp, where the straights speak their loins beautifully, while the queers caper about in adoration, earrings, eye-shadow and harem trousers to signify they are eunuchs. After *Clouds*, it's difficult at first to know whether you're in a YMCA gymnasium or Raymond's Revue Bar. Only the presence

of Thersites (got up like a vulture, with eyes that look as if they're sewn up with red wool) tells you this is Stratford.

Despite considerable freedom with the author's intentions – notably the reciprocated boredom of Helen and Paris, which is textually unsupported – this kind of production might succeed if the acting were better. Eheu! Achilles is disastrously overplayed by Robin Ellis, his pelvis protruding like a Chanel model. Helen is a peroxidised tramp with a gold chain around her neck and a snake bangle sunk in the plumpness of her arm. Shakespeare is less crude in his implied criticisms. The love scenes between Troilus and Cressida, on which so much real disappointment depends, are botched by Francesca Annis and Mike Gwilym. She expresses love with all the wide-eyed naïveté of an Optrex ad, while he stands, strangely reminiscent of Bernard Cribbins, with penguin arms that cry out for a pair of suitcases. It is worse when they come to grips. Either she bounds balletically on her points into his clinch, or they execute a series of floor exercises. People just don't behave like that – not outside the theatre, anyway.

And so to *Bread* – a bumpily acted and unevenly written piece by the West Indian playwright, Mustapha Matura. A West Indian playwright (*sic*) finds it so difficult to raise bread that his girl friend offers to earn it on her back. An actor friend, similarly embarrassed, plans to emigrate to Canada. Enter two impoverished and truculent Rastafarians, angry because the playwright has cancelled his £5 subscription to their magazine. They seize his consumer durables and his play – which is then performed. It depicts the tyranny and downfall of a pathetically corrupt policeman in Trinidad. There are parallels between the frame and the Trinidadian episode – mainly that the policeman has a transistor, while the dramatist has a colour TV. But the point seems to be one of contrast – in the frame, the Rastafarians the poorest people, are the tyrants when they shoot the playwright with a starting pistol; whereas in the play, the poorest people are definitely victims. Either way though, it's clear that capitalism is the real enemy, not each other.

Films

Martin Amis

Socket To Her

The Tenant Plaza 2
Murder by Death *Leicester Square Theatr*

The plight of the Parisian flat-hunter may not seem much of a subject for the psychiatric pathologist, but Roman Polanski's hap hazard new shocker interestingly grounds itself on such domestic dementiae. In the opening sequences, we watch a tiny, timid young clerk (endearingly played by little Roman himself) move queasily into

cramped, murky apartment, suddenly made vacant by the suicidal defenestration of the previous occupant (wary Roman even goes to the hospital to make sure she's dying – she screams at him startlingly through her bandages). Then, bit by bit, the household horrors intensify, though still focusing on such quotidian ills as dustbin dread, having-friends-round hysteria, no-girls-allowed alienation, noise-after-10.30 *nervosa*, and so forth. An outside world continues to exist for Roman – exhaustingly foul-mouthed friends ask him round to their angst-free pads, he has a quite successful snog with a nice friend of the dead girl – but most of the film's energy now goes into establishing the paranoid landscape: fat swarthies stand too close to Roman in hot bars, looks of unsolicited aggression follow him down streets and passageways, and everything in the apartment block is, of course, disconcertingly out of whack.

After this intriguing, if rather small-time, *Kafka Come Home* stuff, things get much madder, as little Roman starts to melt into his shadowy two-room hell – and into the identity of its previous tenant, the dead girl, whose eerie, scattered oddments come periodically to light. Roman finds a plugged-up hole in the wall: there is a human tooth inside. A soon-to-be-evicted loonie from downstairs, an ally of Roman's, defiantly defecates outside every flat in the block except his. People stand in the lavatory opposite his window, staring for hours at nothing, and when Roman goes there for a pee one night he finds the walls covered in a weird cuneiform. Soon, though, paranoia phases into the triter business of possession. Coming across one of the dead girl's dresses in the wardrobe (which has a nasty swing-mirror, like the one in *Repulsion*), why, Roman puts it on; he buys a wig and starts pottering about with the dead girl's make-up. One morning he awakes with blood all over his chin – a front tooth is missing: it is plugged into the wall. By now the film is slipping away into the familiar galleries of psycho-sexual terror. Following his doomed forerunner, little Roman jumps from the window, survives, crawls gorily (and preposterously) up the stairs, jumps again, survives again. Finally, in a hopeless bid for some cohering symmetry, we are shown the freshly bandaged Roman in hospital, his one eye bulging in alarm as the old flat-hunter Roman creeps in to make sure he's dying. So he was she all along, or she was already he, or he turned out to be she, or she he. Or something.

The first hour of *The Tenant* could have gone on to become Polanski's most telling study to date of mental imbalance. Neurosis, anyway, is banal; and it is often wincingly funny: the nauseous cowering with which the neurotic reacts to the huff-and-puff of daily life can, as Polanski shows, make for a very intimate kind of dramatic irony. Mid-snog in the cinema – and hardly able to believe his luck – Roman averts his eyes for a moment to see, inches away, a huge face glowering at him in incredulous disgust. 'The drinks are on me!' hollers a young drunk in a bar – 'everyone gets a drink!': the drunk then wanders over and thoughtfully inspects the silent Roman and his companion: 'Every-

one except him,' he adds. Polanski's most sophisticated look at the horror genre was in the comedy *Dance of the Vampires*, where the conventions were reversed: frightful things are happening all about you, if only you'd turn the right way. In *The Tenant*, as to some extent in *Cul de Sac*, *Repulsion* and *Rosemary's Baby*, the baseless fears of distraught minds, once established, are abruptly given vulgar, tangible shape in the observed world. Psychosis is replaced by skull-football: this is the real banality behind a director who never quite dares to trust his wit.

It's a good job that Truman Capote is given little to do in *Murder by Death*: his first two challenges *qua* thespian are to put something in an envelope and to put something else in a desk. Capote fumbles the envelope and practically loses his thumb in the drawer: an adroit opening to an otherwise rather hamfisted film. What Capote was trying to do with those disobedient trotters of his was to dispatch at-home cards to five world-class detectives, cordially inviting them 'to dinner and a murder'. The result is an all-star, *Orient-Express*, ten-little-nigger, country-house-intrigue spectacular, scripted by the much-fancied Neil Simon (sample ribtickler: 'As you can see, I can see.' 'So I see!') and needlessly well acted by a sprightly cast. It doesn't, of course, send the genre up very high or keep it up there very long: the plot is all twists (fake connoisseurship here), the jokes all one-liners, the pastiche lacking affection as much as intelligence.

Television

Ian Hamilton

Adult Education

I'd promised myself, and two extremely sour-faced kids, that I'd forgo the return of *Match of the Day* (BBC-1) in order to watch, critic-style, ITV's somewhat defeated-looking alternative, a documentary on *The National Theatre* (LWT). The promise was made, I should say, before I knew that *MoD* would be featuring Everton's shock drubbing of Queen's Park Rangers, but in any case I don't think I'd have lasted out. It wasn't just the appearance within seconds of a triumphant Peter Hall ('Well, it's here . . . or almost here') nor was it even the doggerel commentary that linked the gratified entrances of the supremo and his theatre-building colleagues ('At long last, after too much stop and go/Lyttleton, Olivier and Cottesloe'). No, the real trouble, I'm afraid, was that my interest in this of course most interesting of sagas had never before been put to any kind of test. Just as Jimmy Hill was scheduled to hit our screens on the other channel, two mincing theatre historians wafted into view, chattering brightly and poking their fingers at photos of antique thespians. It took a single, snake-like movement of the wrist, and Hill was still intact. Some test.

A shaming revelation, and it's a pity that *Match of the Day* is not more worthy of the disloyalties it no doubt caused that night. Last winter it did serious damage to the adult education movement by setting itself against *Second House* ('But, dear, I thought you were interested in American Writing of the 1930s') and on Saturday perhaps thousands of theatre-goers were appalled to find themselves watching John Osborne keeping goal for West Bromwich Albion. With so much of our culture in its hands, it ought really to try tarding up its prose style. 'At the beginning of a season, reputations count for nothing!' blared the hero of Montreal (or so it sounded; in fact it was John Mottson, aping his big brother); 'This is the moment when everybody's equal.' The first-day-of-the-season motif ran throughout, so it was almost impossible for any action to be taken as routine: all sins were original. 'Good save by Parkes . . . and it's gone in! Well, I've heard of some eventful starts to the season.' So have we; every season.

'The real yardstick of TV is its treatment of politicians,' mused Anthony Smith in his Festival 40 contribution, *The World in a Box*, and with the globe to choose from he picked the Dutch style as his favourite. Here, it seems, politicians are lured into semi-cabaret situations, and are quite often interrupted in mid-cliché by the sound of music. Needless to say they have to endure the switch from foreign policy to sequined chanteuse with good-sport aplomb, and the haggard ministers in Smith's extract were clearly finding the effort something of an effort. But this 'party atmosphere' has possibilities; one did think wistfully of Wedgwood Benn having to look as if he enjoyed being found less entertaining than Val Doonican. Smith's samples of world television were intelligently chosen; most demonstrated the obvious, that most television genres are invented in America, but there were a few ethnic goodies on display – from Japan, Nigeria and Mexico. Oddly enough, one of the most riveting sequences was about as American as you can get, and was there to demonstrate the built-in sadism of the quiz show. A fat lady had won \$750 and could either keep it or make a try for the big one, \$25,000. She elected to gamble, picked out her envelope, and handed it to the suspense-building M.C. 'It's, it's, it's . . . it's 25,000!' he screamed, whereupon the fat lady wept with joy, and advanced upon him for a hug. '25,000 lire!' he bawled back at her, 'for which you could be a pretty big person in Rome for about 45 minutes!' Collapse of big person. M.C. goes berserk with glee. Bloodthirsty roars and chortles from the fans. All very nasty.

If You Knew Susie (BBC-1) was the coy title of a programme about dyslexia introduced by Susan Hampshire. This elegant actress suffers from 'congenital word-blindness', and her task here was to explain that a lot of intelligent people find it hard to read and write. She herself didn't discover that she had any categorisable affliction until she was adolescent. She didn't explain what happened to her, in terms of self-improvement, when she found out she was 'dyslexic', but she was a sympathetic hostess to the various theorists and sufferers whose testimony she present-

ed. The upshot seems to be that if you can spot the ailment early enough, patient remedial teaching can put some things right; but that in any case reading and writing are too blithely thought of as the criteria for judging ordinary intelligence. We were thus shown, on the one hand, a 4-year-old child tested out for first signs of dyslexia; and on the other, some pictorial tests used in industry for discovering the aptitude of applicants who might have trouble stringing sentences together. I was slightly troubled by the 4-year-old, whose only proffered signs of difficulty were that he couldn't kick a ball with his left foot and had difficulty putting matches back into a box. His anxious mother was told that he could well be dyslexic and was invited to return in two years' time when they'd be really sure. An uneasy two years, and the example made one aware of the dangers (the benefits are clear) of giving psychological disturbances a name. Still, a programme that could not fail to be of worth.

Centre Play (BBC-2) continues to fill one with unease about the future of television drama. *The Squad* by Martin Dillon was a particularly heavy-handed shot at examining the inner workings of a group of Irish bombers/gunmen. The ones who were pissed or psychopathic were balanced by other ones who were tremblingly idealistic or clearsightedly practical. Needless to say, the trembler got both the best and the worst of it; we were supposed to like him but the baddies had more guts. 'These intellectuals are all the same . . . if he shows any sign of weakness tonight, you've got to get rid of him, and you know how.' Another limp, though rather touchingly archaic, piece was Anglia's *Can You Keep a Secret*, in which a widow and a confirmed bachelor fought to nurture their budding romance under the scandal-mongering gaze of their co-villagers. 'O my God . . . here comes . . . the colonel!' Roused eventually to defiance they blurt out their ugly secret in the village post office. And guess what? Everybody weeps, shakes them by the hand, etc. Well, that be Anglia, that be.

Records

Wilfrid Mellers

Rapt

Missa Solemnis Heather Harper, Janet Baker, Robert Tear, Hans Sotin, New Philharmonia Chorus, London Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Carlos Maria Giulini *EMI SLS 989*

Beethoven considered the *Missa Solemnis*, finished in 1823, his greatest work; it is certainly his most stupendous – a religious affirmation of a kind previously unattempted and still unique. At one level it has analogies with fashionable religious concepts of his day, especially with Kantian morality and humanitarian Freemasonry; moreover Beethoven prepared himself for his task by

studying Catholic dogma, Latin declamation and the liturgical musics of the Roman Church, as well as the diatonic and chromatic choral polyphony of Handel and Bach.

Yet what he created, from his moments of *raptus*, was an apprehension of Godhead immeasurably beyond topicality and locality. The music admits the gulf between the infallibly divine and the fallibly human; yet finds the gulf bridgeable through the human imagination which Beethoven, like Blake, identified with Christ. Here indeed are 'the varieties of religious experience': from the mellow Masonic euphony of the *Kyrie* or *Gratias* to the incandescent frenzy of the stuttering wrath of God at the end of the *Gloria*; from the savage harmonic lacerations and rhythmic dislocations of the crucified Christ (equated with rock-enchained, eagle-eviscerated Beethoven-Prometheus) to the numinous modal mystery of the *Incarnatus* or *Sanctus*; from the labyrinthine, prophetically chromatic introversion of the dark-hued *Praeludium* to the light-liberated *Benedictus* wherein the Holy Dove seraphically descends on solo violin, haloed by flutes; from the human heart at rest within Nature to the trumpety trumpetings of a war-ravaged world, both incarnate within the 'prayer for inner and outer peace' which is the *Dona nobis pacem*.

The *Missa Solemnis* – like the Hammerklavier Sonata which immediately preceded it and is built on the same scheme of key relationships – is, in a sense, unperformable; one might even say that its unperformability is what it's about. Beethoven refused to alter a note at the behest of battered singers and bruised instrumentalists; in his own day performers solved the problem simply by leaving out the bits they couldn't negotiate. Perhaps deaf Beethoven-Christ forgave their weakness; but Beethoven-Yahweh certainly didn't, and Time has proved that he was right. Though the Mass will never sound in any way easy (because it isn't), all the parts can be sung and played, given total commitment; technical deficiencies, inevitable because the performers are human, become as nought if *incarnation* is achieved. We can't expect this to happen often; but happen it can, today or at any time, for there are few purely historical barriers between us and Beethoven's vision. In this sense Beethoven's Mass, if more scarifying and less immediately assuaging, may be closer to us than Bach's.

Since there was never a work more 'inspired', the role of the conductor, in attaining incarnation, is paramount. For me Klemperer still sets the standard, though Giulini's new version runs him close. As usual, he reveals Beethoven's sometimes unexpected lyricism: the 'Masonic' polyphonies of the *Kyrie* sing hymnically in Kant's Invisible Church; the ideal-Hellenistic bucolicism of the *Dona nobis* floats; the *Benedictus* soars. Because Giulini reveals Beethoven's vast melodic span he reveals too the astonishing complexities of the long-range architecture; the structure – based on the generative interval of falling third, on the mediant tonal relationships between D and B flat major complementing that, and on the gravitational pull of both towards their subdominants – sounds as organic as indeed it is. Of all Beethoven's

major works, this is the one that most profoundly explores the morphological approach to form that Goethe also spoke of in reference to his poetry. Giulini justifies in development over immense cumulative paragraphs his gentle start to the *Et vitam venturi* fugue; and because he apprehends the Whole with evolutionary logic, the parts cohere. Moments that are indeed 'out of this world' – for instance, the hush at the beginning of the *Incarnatus*, the transition in the *Crucifixus* from the dominant ninth on 'passus' to the F minor triad that buries us on 'sepultus' – sound inevitable because miraculous and miraculous because inevitable. Only Beethoven as Goethe's dark daemon seems a trifle underweight: in the *Gloria* there's operatic fire, electrified by rhythmic vivacity, but not quite the *mysterium tremendum et stupiosum* that Klemperer uncovers.

Yet if Giulini's Beethoven doesn't here become the 'vessel filled with divine wrath' he assuredly is, one can't say more than that Janet Baker's radiant singing (especially in the *Agnus*) and Rodney Friend's playing of the solo in the *Benedictus* fully attain the complementarily divine ecstasy of the music. The other soloists are very good if more humanly fallible: orchestra and chorus, Giulini-inspired, become the forge wherein Beethoven, as Blakean Divine Smithy, transmutes even basest metals into gold. So Giulini gives us what Beethoven asked for when he wrote at the head of his score '*Von Herzen – Möge es wieder – zu Herzen gehen*': a communication that, in Karl Jasper's phrase, 'reaches its goal' and so effects 'a transcendent perfection wherein there is no longer any need to communicate'.

Weekend Competition

No 2427

Set by Jim Anthony

Hot-loined correspondents have often disguised their sweet nuthins in the form of place-name acronyms. Thus, 'Norwich' at the foot of a letter signifies 'Nickers Off Ready When I Come Home'. Competitors are exhorted to use Tenby, Hunstanton, Goole, Pwlllehi or any other British town to devise similar codes for itinerant randies. Not *too* filthy, please, because our normally indulgent and taciturn Editor is still vainly trying to Clean Up the Comp.

Result of No 2424

Set by T. A. Dyer

Competitors were asked to devise two Byronic stanzas on the Olympic Games.

Report

by Raineroo

Not much space this week, which is a bit of luck. Solemnity was the main foe of success here – odd, when you consider how crassly risible the Games have become. But the winners, who will be handsomely rewarded, ably evoked Lord Byron's slovenly panache. Honourable mentions to John Dacey, Gudrun Firmani and Aubrey Bush; £5 each to Fagg, Rogers and Marks; £7 to Mr Stanley J. Sharpless.

The flame of the Olympiad is quenched

NAOMI MARKS

Assiac

Chess Board

F: L. A. Kayev 1938

Weekend Crossword 1179

ACROSS

DOWN

SETSQUARE

Solution to No 1177

Prizewinners to No 1177
Michael Hart (Dublin 3)
Mrs F. Chapman (Blackburn)
J. P. Smith (London NW1)

APPOINTMENTS

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**The Rev. James Clarke, Principal Officer,
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or telephone 0533-25505 for further details.

National Union of Agricultural and Allied Workers

requires an

Administrative and Education Officer

Duties will include staff management, the arranging of weekend and residential schools on trade union matters, the oversighting of internal union elections, the arranging of the union's National Conference and associated matters. Trade union experience preferable. Salary £3,857 plus expenses. Superannuation scheme.

National Union of Agricultural and Allied Workers

requires an

Editor

of its monthly journal. Successful applicant will, in addition to editorial duties, be required to draft policy documents and correspondence on policy matters, with Ministerial Departments, and act as the union's public relations officer. Trade union experience essential. Some agricultural journalism and research experience desirable. Salary £3,857 plus expenses. Superannuation scheme.

Apply the **General Secretary, National Union of Agricultural and Allied Workers, 308 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1.**

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or write to:

**The Chairman,
Martin Luther King Centre,
Sheringham Road,
London N7 by 10 September.**

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Candidates should preferably have teaching experience, organising ability, a knowledge of the Inner London Education system, and an awareness of current thinking and problems in race and community relations. Experience in working and relating with young people either within or outside a school/college setting would be desirable.

Flexibility of approach is important, both in relating to the young people and in developing contacts with parents, teachers and those in the employment field.

Salary £3,426-£4,251 p.a. Application forms and job description available from **CCRL, 441 Brixton Road, London SW9 8HE. Tel. 01-274 7722 Ext. 168.** Closing date for applications is 10 days from the appearance of this advertisement.

Note: The project which is financed by an Urban Programme grant is due to end in March 1977, but we are at present negotiating with ILEA for its continuance beyond that date.

National Union of Bank Employees London Area Office, 30 City Road, EC1.

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Closing date: 10 September.

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Applications are invited for the post of Research Officer to the Electrical Power Engineers' Association, which represents the 34,000 engineers, scientists and managers in the electricity supply industry throughout the United Kingdom, and has recently decided to expand its sphere of representation to cover similar staffs in industry at large.

The duties cover the full range of research and information work required by a trade union, and includes a major requirement for high quality research on such questions as e.g. energy and incomes policies. Applicants should have a degree in economics, statistics or one of the social sciences, or be of a similar standard of ability. Experience or knowledge of trade union work and/or industry will be an advantage.

The salary is on a scale ranging from £3,210 to £6,910, plus £312 p.a. salary supplement. Starting salary will be according to experience.

Further details about the post can be obtained from:

**The General Secretary,
Electrical Power Engineers' Association,
Station House,
Fox Lane North,
Chertsey,
Surrey KT16 9HW.**

Closing date 20 September 1976.

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Applications are invited for appointment as Tutor in the Department of Political Science. Applicants should hold an appropriate honours degree. The appointee should be qualified and prepared to tutor in the course for Political Science I. Some preference may be given to applicants able to tutor in Political Thought, Australian Politics and public policy and government administration areas, though specialists in any field will be considered.

Appointment will be on an annual basis for four years. It is intended that the successful applicant will take up duty by 1 February 1977. Commencing salary will be within the scale: \$A9,325—3 x \$A343, 2 x \$A342—\$A11,038 p.a. (under review), according to qualifications and experience.

Candidates should write to the Association of Commonwealth Universities (Appts) 36 Gordon Square, London WC1H 0PF, or to The Registrar, University of Tasmania, Box 252C, G.P.O., Hobart, Tasmania, 7001, for further information, application forms and a detailed statement of the conditions of appointment. Applications close on 24 September 1976.

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Closing date: 17 September 1976.

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